

# JEW IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF TEXAS

1560-1850

Ya'akov Aronson

Bar Ilan University

*Dedicated to the memory of Bernard Rapoport of Waco, a modern Jewish Texan who made significant contributions to communal and political life in the US and Israel and to the world of librarianship. Among his contributions were the establishment of the Noah's Ark Educational Center at the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo, arranging, while Chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas, the establishment of a branch of the University of Texas in San Antonio, a city heavily populated by citizens of Mexican descent whose financial resources precluded their going to college out of town and the establishment of the Amy and Emily Rapoport Fund at the Library of Congress for the support of exhibitions of materials from the Library's Hebraic Section.*

Two terms in the title of this presentation require defining: **Jews** and **Texas**.

## **Jew**

Jews are inclined to claim as a Jew anyone who has the slightest connection to Judaism. Take for instance the story currently circulating that one day the head of the Church of England will be a Jew. Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, is alleged to be by some genealogists to halachically be a Jew, though if this is correct she probably doesn't know much about Judaism. But her Mother it is said is Jewish therefore she, according to Jewish law, is Jewish. And Kate's children will be halachically Jewish. So when her first born, male or female according to the latest British law, succeeds his/her Father, Prince William, as Monarch after he succeeds his Father, after he does (or maybe does not) succeed his Mother as Monarch then, as the British Monarch is also head of the Church of England, a Jew will head the Anglican Church.

Looking at this question from the opposite angle, Judaism seems to extend its hold on many with no ostensible connection to anything Jewish. In the recently popular book, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, about the Ephrussi Family of Odessa (Russia, today Ukraine, not Texas) which was very important in international grain trading and banking in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries but whose members seemed to readily assimilate, it is reported that when the Mother of a son who had become an Anglican priest died he went into his church and said Kaddish.

Therefore, for our purposes anyone who claimed to be or was accused of being a Jew will be accepted as a Jew.

## **Texas**

A very popular amusement park in the United States is SIX FLAGS. But it isn't generally known that the park started as SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS. When the park went national the OVER TEXAS part was dropped from the name. The original name derived from the fact that Texas was ruled at one time or another by six different political entities.

### **<Image 1>**

The first claim to the area that included Texas was made by the Spanish but as they didn't send settlers into the area when claimed the above chart begins with the French who were the first to establish a settlement in what would be called Texas. In the mid 1680's the French explorer LaSalle sailed toward the mouth of the Mississippi

River but was blown off course and landed in Texas. He established a settlement where he landed before setting out overland to locate the mouth of the Mississippi and this settlement lasted four years.

The Spanish next sent settlers into Texas which was a part of Mexico. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821 and then Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836 and was an independent country for 9 years. The local population wanted to join the Union immediately but as there was a balance between slave and free states at that time Texas, a country where slavery was legal, had to wait until a free state was ready to join the union in order to keep the balance. That occurred in 1845. Then in 1861 Texas succeeded from the United States and joined the Confederacy. Finally in 1865 Texas came back into the Union thus there were six different flags over Texas.

But the Texas of this period wasn't exactly the one we recognize from the map of the United States today.

### <Image 2>

When Texas joined the Union it included, in addition to today's State of Texas, parts of Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming. For the parts pared away from the state a payment of \$10m was made to the state. And, as we shall see, in earlier times the territory of Texas was even larger.

My interest in the topic of the role of Jews in early Texas history began in 1949 when my home town WACO celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A special edition of the local newspaper included sections with historical information and I discovered that one of the men who laid out the town in 1849 was Jewish, Jacob de Cordova. I had always intended to do research about the part Jews played in early Texas history but over 60 years were to pass before the chance to accomplish this presented itself when I proposed the present paper to AJL.

By the way, you might not think that I, having lived out of Texas for 55 years, 41 of them in Israel, would not be a person qualified to deal with this subject. Just to let you know that where ever I have been I was seen as a Southerner or more specifically a Texan I present two caricatures drawn by students when I taught at Yeshiva University for Boys in Manhattan 1) and at the Yeshiva of Flatbush in Brooklyn (2).

### <Image 3>

If you don't recognize the uniform, it is of a Lt. General (Robert E. Lee's rank) in the Confederate States Army.

### <Image 4>

Here I guess I'm just a plain cowboy.

The first person to engage in research about Jews on the Texas frontier was Rabbi Henry Cohen (1863-1952) of Galveston. Commenting on his work Bryan Stone, who made a presentation at the opening plenary session of the convention and whom I consider the person most knowledgeable about the role of Jews in history of Texas, said ". . . he identified every Jew in frontier Texas—and then some". In fact, Rabbi Cohen was probably overzealous in "finding" Jews and describing the Jewishness of many of these early Texans.

This is a picture of Rabbi Cohen meeting Jews arriving at the harbor as part of the Galveston Plan to divert Jews from congested New York.

### <Image 5>

A word about sources: conflicting sources are found in regard to much of the information available for the period. In addition, one of the most important sources of historical information is the archive of the Inquisition. Many people were accused of being secret Jews (also called conversos, anusim, crypto Jews) because someone was jealous of their success, wanted their land, etc., and the easiest way to discredit them was to accuse them of being secret Jews. As the Inquisition wasn't too exacting in verifying testimony many times someone who

had nothing to do with Judaism would be convicted of being a secret Jew and punishment, including confiscation of property, burning at the stake, etc., would be meted out

## **JEWS IN NEW SPAIN**

There has been speculation that Columbus was a secret Jew but the first verified secret Jew in the New World was Columbus's translator Luis de Torres. The first recorded Jew in the Spanish territory in North America was Hernando Alonso. He came over as a carpenter with the Spanish explorer Cortez and was engaged in building bridges. There seems to be no reason for someone to accuse him of being a secret Jew unless he was one. As a result of an accusation the Inquisition had him burned at the stake in 1529.

The next mention of Jews in this area occurs in the period 1560-1590. Luis Carvajal (some record the name as Carabajal) saw the New World as presenting an opportunity for success, as did most of those who came, and received an appointment as the Admiral of a small fleet that sailed for the Spanish territory in the New World in the 1560's. His parents were secret Jews and it is not clear if this fact was known to him.

### **<Image 6>**

I can't vouch for the accuracy of this drawing. The following is a drawing of a typical Conquistador of the period and the Carvajal drawing looks very similar.

### **<Image 7>**

During his first venture to the New World Carvajal proved himself by capturing 77 Englishmen who were considered pirates and defeating local Indians. He reward was grants of land in the Spanish's new territories.

During a return to Spain he ingratiated himself with the powers that be and was appointed governor of an enormous area called Nuevo Reino de Leon.

### **<Image 8>**

As can be seen, this area included much of Mexico and all of what is today southern Texas.

It was customary to give large land grants to people called Empresarios who would then bring settlers to the area. Without people on the ground a claim to an area was worthless. All of these land grants given by Spain included a clause that stipulated that none of the settlers could be "New Christians", i.e. that no one in last 3 generations of the family had converted from Judaism. For some reason this clause did not appear in the grant to Carvajal and many of his relatives who came to settle the area were in fact secret Jews.

Among other things, Carvajal, like many others of the time, was a slave trader, slaves here being local Indians. He would later be accused of using his position to promote the slave trade.

The family was prospering when in 1589 (or 1590 according to another source) many members were arrested and accused of Judaizing. The charge against Carvajal was harboring Jews as there was no evidence to prove that he was a secret Jew. Also involved might have been an attempt by the authorities to curb the slave trade. Carvajal was sentenced to 1 year in jail and a 6 year exile. He did not survive the year in jail.

His Lt. Governor was a secret Jew named Gaspar Castano.

### **<Image 9>**

In addition to being Lt. Governor he was also the Mayor of a place named San Luis, today Monterey, Mexico. The main economic activity there was silver mining and when the silver supply started to run out, which happened about the same time as the Governor was being accused of various things, Castano set out with a

group of settlers to look for new sources of silver in what would later be Texas, thus being the first Jew to set foot in Texas. He traveled along the Pecos River as far as what today is New Mexico.

#### <Image 10>

Expeditions like this required the permission of the Viceroy in Mexico and Castano had requested such permission but when after a long wait it didn't arrive he set out expecting the permission to be forwarded to him.

There are conflicting reports of the nature of the expedition. One report says it fought the Indians and took slaves. The official journal of the expedition, required by law, said that it was guided by chivalry, magnanimity and morality and that Castano's insistence "that nothing be taken from the Indians nor any of them molested almost led to a mutiny near the end of the expeditions' exploration on the Rio Grande". (The journal was published in the 1960's---see *Suggested Readings* at end of paper).

While the expedition was in New Mexico the Viceroy sent men to arrest Castano accusing him of leaving on the expedition without permission, fomenting rebellion and (for good measure) Judaising. He didn't resist arrest and was found guilty and sentenced to a six year exile in the Philippines. Though he began the exile the sentence was appealed to a court in Spain. In the retrial he was cleared but the acquittal came too late to benefit him as he had been killed in a mutiny on a ship in the Philippines.

Luis Carvajal's original grant had included the right to pass control of the territory under his control to a person of his choice. Having no children he decided that the person most qualified to continue his project would be his nephew, Luis Rodriguez. As a token of his appreciation Rodriguez changed his name to Carvajal and in history is known as Carvajal II or Carvajal the Younger. Rabbi Cohen reports a story about his declaring his Judaism and circumcising himself.

When Carvajal I was arrested his nephew was also, and, according to one source, sent to a lunatic asylum. Another source says he was sent to a monastery. He apparently convinced his "jailers" that he was a true Catholic and was released. But later he was rearrested as a relapsed Jew. He was tortured and, according to one source, implicated 121 people as being secret Jews. That source says he jumped out of a window to avoid further torture and thus met his death. Another source says that he and other relatives were burnt at the stake in 1596.

His importance is that Carvajal II was the first Jewish author in America. He wrote memoirs and, with his brother, wrote hymns and dirges for the fast days. These lay in the Inquisition archives for 300 years until being found in the 1900's. They were published in 1935 and an English edition appeared in 1967.

The next documented appearance of Jews in the area occurs only in the early 1800's. In 1731 families were brought over from the Canary Islands to populate the area and it is known that there were many secret Jews in those islands but there is no documentation that would prove that in fact secret Jews were among the families brought to the Texas area.

#### **TEXAS IN REBELLION**

In the early 1800's the most important lay leader among the Jews in the United States was Mordechai Manuel Noah. He is known in Jewish history for his attempt to establish a haven for Jews in New York state which he named Ararat after the mountain on which Noah's ark landed after the flood waters receded. Noah was active in politics and among other offices he held over the years he was appointed US Consul to Tunis in 1813. This was the period of the Barbary pirates and the taking of Americans from ships and enslaving them. Noah was successful in having a number of these slaves freed but in 1815 he was relieved of his post because it was felt that his religion was "an obstacle to the exercise of Consular function". It was felt among the American Jewish community that this move might set a precedent concerning the participation of Jews in politics. But Noah

received letters from Presidents Adams, Jefferson and Madison assuring him that that the contribution of Jews to the development of the United States was generally acknowledged and appreciated and there should be no fear of restrictions on their activities. The Jefferson letter was purchased by Ludwig Jesselson and presented to the Yeshiva University Library in honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of YU.

Now, to tie Noah to Texas. He had a cousin in England named Samuel.

#### <Image 11>

At the age of 20 he came to the US and, probably through the influence of his cousin, received an appointment to West Point. He was one of the 5 members of the class of 1807. Samuel Noah served in the US Army until 1811 reaching the rank of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. His resignation was caused by the slow pace of advancement and the appointment of civilians to ranks higher than his.

This was a time of unrest in South America against Spain and among Anglos in Texas against Spanish/Mexican domination. An expedition was being formed in New Orleans to free Texas. It was felt the unrest was so wide spread that the local population would flock to the assistance on the invaders. Noah joined the expedition and participated in the capture of Goliad in 1813. The invaders held off an attempted recapture and then went on to conquer San Antonio and capture the Spanish Governor. For safe keeping the Governor was sent to New Orleans with a military escort to protect him. But the commander of the escort cut the Governor's throat, according to him, in retaliation for the Spaniards killing his Father. This act so irritated a number of the Americans participating in the expedition that they returned to the US, Noah among them. He also hoped to be reappointed an officer in the US Army and join in the fight against the British in the War of 1812 but for some reason this appointment wasn't offered. He then volunteered to fight as a foot soldier and participated in the battles of Brooklyn and Harlem Heights. Most of the years after the War he spent teaching school.

Jews throughout history have been involved in legal ventures as well as semi legal ones and illegal ones, and sometimes in all three categories at the same time. Such is the case of the Brothers de la Porta, Moses (Morin) and Jao. They were born in Portugal and moved on to Brazil because of the Inquisition. The Inquisition was probably also the cause of them coming to North America, as it was for the first group of Jews to come to New Amsterdam in 1654. They ended up in New Orleans and of their various business ventures the most interesting was their ownership of privateers. A privateer is in essence a legalized pirate. A nation at war in those days issued commissions, called letters of marque, to private ship owners authorizing them to attack enemy shipping in the name of the country issuing the letter of marque and take the captured merchandise as their prize, i.e. payment for the expenses for the cost of outfitting their ship. But of course the value of the prizes was always more than the cost of outfitting the ship. Privateers had been active in the American Revolution in the previous century.

At the time, the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, South American countries were rebelling against Spain and President Simon Bolivar of Venezuela was very generous in issuing letters of marque. Operating under these the de la Porta brothers outfitted a number of ships and a headquarters was set up on Galveston Island in 1814-15. The camp had a government and Jao was the "Secretary of State." Morin died in 1817 so we hear no more about him.

#### <Image 12>

At the same time the most famous pirate in the area was Jean Laffite. He had organized his followers into a stock company and they had set up headquarters on another island off the coast of Texas. The two camps joined and Laffite moved to Galveston. Jao was appointed secretary of the stock company and as such was charged with issuing the letters of marque. This arrangement lasted three years and then Laffite moved on. Jao stayed in the area and traded with the Indians. He suffered from a skin disease which caused white spots on his skin. The Indians gave him the nickname Old Blanco and they had a legend that albinos have supernatural

powers. Therefore when a war broke out between the Indians and Stephen Austin's settlers the Indians took Jao as a mascot to aid them during the war. Afterwards he moved back to New Orleans.

So far we have been talking about Jews but don't know much about their Jewishness. Not we turn to a Jew but we don't know much about his Judaism, Adolphus Sterne. About him Brian Stone says "His exact religious affiliation has eluded historians of early Texas . . ." and we'll see why.

Sterne came to Texas in the 1820's and settled in Nacogdoches, a city today of about 33,000 residents. Like many others, he came from New Orleans. He had also been in Tennessee and there had met Sam Houston, who in later years would be a frequent visitor in his home.

In 1828 he married Eva, a Catholic who would be Sam Houston's sponsor when he converted to Catholicism. Conversion was a requirement for people coming to settle in Spanish Texas.

### <Image 13>

Some historians of this period are always trying to make a settler as Jewish as possible and there is a story that Sterne didn't attend Sam Houston's conversion ceremony because it took place on Yom Kippur. Another source says that he gave "a party on the porch of his home and opened considerable wine".

Leaving these claims aside---proof of his knowledge of and interest in Judaism and that he was a Jew, even if not so observant, can be seen in his diary which was published in *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* in 1926. In the years 1840 and 1843 he notes the date of Yom Kippur, writing Yom Kippur in Hebrew characters. But it appears that he was a practicing Christian. He was appointed to a committee to build a Roman Catholic church and in his diary records attending services at a Methodist Church. He also notes attending Camp Meetings (revivals).

Sincerity was the most import trait exhibited by these settlers and it did not seem to matter in which faith it was exhibited. Everything, including religion was very fluid on the frontier. As Bryan Stone observes ". . . they were Jews and were not Jews, just as Stephen F. Austin's Old 300 [the original families he brought to Texas] were and were not Catholics, as Anglo Texans were and were not Mexicans".

During the Texas revolution Sterne smuggled weapons to the rebelling colonists and financed the New Orleans Grays, two companies of men who fought in the Revolution

After Texas Joined the Union Sterne served three terms in the Texas House of Representatives and one in the Senate and his diary is one of the best sources for early Nacogdoches history. He is mentioned in the Wikipedia article on Nacogdoches as having had the finest home in town.

Jews came to Texas because it offered opportunities but there was no organized Jewish life in the area. But these people still had a strong feeling of being Jews. One wrote to Isaac Leeser, editor of the *Occident*, a monthly magazine of Jewish news and features, that he felt by settling in places like Texas these Jews were fulfilling the Biblical prophecy of Jews being dispersed throughout the world.

Another Jew in Texas before the revolution was David Levi Kokernot.

### <Image 14>

Born in Holland Kokernot has been engaged in various occupations during his early years, including an being apprenticed to a ship pilot and later being a crew member on merchant vessels. This experience he used when he helped set up the Texas Navy during the Revolution against Mexico. He commanded one of the boats in that conflict, boat not ship. The vessel was a sloop, which carried a crew of 4-5 men.

### <Image 15>

He was also involved in land battles and in one, at Concepcion, a mission in the area of what is now San Antonio where the Texans were commanded by James Bowie, “father” of the famed Bowie knife, 82 Texans held off and then chased 1000 Mexicans. That sounds like something from that happened in the Israel War of Independence. Other sources change the ratio of Texans to Mexicans increasing the number of Texans to 90 but reducing the number of Mexicans to 275. Unfortunately after the war Kokernot ruined his reputation when he overzealously carried out orders to confiscate livestock from farmers who hadn’t supported the revolution. And later in life he converted to Methodism.

Another Jew involved in the Revolution was Dr. Alfred Moses Levy. He was also born in Holland and had lived in Richmond and New Orleans before coming to Texas. He joined the New Orleans Grays and was subsequently appointed Surgeon in Chief of the Texas army. He was wounded in the Battle of Bexar in the vicinity of San Antonio. Later he joined the Navy as a surgeon and when his ship was captured he was held captive in Mexico. But after three months he escaped and walked back to Texas. Following the War he set up a private medical practice in Matagorda, a town south of Houston and was appointed to a medical board established by the Texas Legislature. For his service in the Revolution he was given a grant of land.

#### <Image 16>

As were most of the land grants, this one is for 640 acres of land, a square mile. The hand written citation on the grant says he served in the Revolution with “exemplary bravery”.

#### <Image 17>

In 1986 his memory was honored with the erection of a historical grave marker in Matagorda (population 503 in 2010). Also in that year, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Texas Revolution, the City of Houston declared April 26 as Albert Moses Levy Memorial Day in honor of Jews who participated in the fight for Texas independence. In 1841 Dr. Levy donated 320 acres of land to what would become Southwestern University at Georgetown, Texas, probably the first major endowment by an individual to a Texas institution of higher learning.

Though Jews did not play a major role in the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 we can’t skip over what is the most famous battle of the Texas Revolution. Estimates of Jews at the Alamo vary from 2 to 8. All the defenders, including such famous people as James Bowie, William Travis and Davy Crockett were killed, as was Avram (Anthony) Wolf, a Jew. Wolf, a widower, had moved to Texas in 1835 and joined the army. He had two sons, aged 11 and 13 and apparently having no one with whom to leave them, brought them with him to the army. The entire family was wiped out during the battle. There is a famous story about Colonel Travis, the commander, drawing a line in the dirt with his sword and saying that all who were prepared to fight to the death should come over to his side of the line. The story is known because one Louis Rose, a Jew, didn’t cross the line and immediately left the Alamo before the battle began. Rose had a nickname, Moses. This was probably because he was the oldest man there, age 51. He might have been a mercenary having previously fought with Napoleon in Russia.

### **THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS AND STATEHOOD**

The final two Jews to be discussed are what were called Empresarios. As mentioned before, to maintain a hold on an area claimed in the New World settlers would have to be brought to that area. The Spanish approach to this was to give large land grants to individuals who would then be responsible for bringing settlers to the area. Of course there would be a profit in this for the empresario. This same approach was continued by Mexico after it won its independence from Spain and the Republic of Texas when it gained its independence from Mexico.

Henri Castro, a French Jew, was one of these Empresarios.

#### <Image 18>

Among the business deals he conducted were some involving US-French cooperation. During the Texas Revolution he undertook an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a European loan for the Texans. But the negotiations required him visiting Texas and there he saw a great opportunity for success so at the age of 55, ancient for those days, Castro moved to Texas. He was given land near San Antonio and tried to get people from France to populate the area. But working against him were two factors. France had recently obtained Algeria as a colony and was encouraging people to move there. Also, in 1842 there was a brief Mexican invasion of Texas which didn't give prospective settlers a good feeling about the stability of the area. So he turned his attention to Alsace-Lorraine on the French-German border. The people in that area were known for their industriousness and the area was highly overpopulated. Castro offered 640 acres to families from there willing to move and eventually sent 27 ships carrying about 2000 settlers to Texas between the years 1842-1847. But he hadn't sufficiently prepared the agents in Texas to deal with the new settlers and they endured endless hardships. Eventually he realized that he himself would have to take care of the Texas end of the settlement project and moved there. In 1844 he took 400 colonists to the area granted to him and worked alongside them to make the new settlement succeed. The settlers voted to call the settlement Castroville and when two years later he returned to Europe to enlist more settlers the people in the settlement wrote that "We take pleasure in acknowledging that you have treated us like a liberal and kind Father . . ." The area he settled is sometimes referred to as *The Little Alsace of Texas* because of the origin of so many of its citizens. Castro returned the next year and continued sending colonists but the colony suffered from Indian attacks and jealousy by other empresarios and when natural causes, drought, a locust plague and a cholera plague hit, the settlement was devastated. Castro was reduced to poverty and petitioned the State Legislature for aid, calling to their attention to how hard he had worked to promote Texas and reminding them that he had invested \$100,000 of his own money in the project. No answer to his appeal was received. Henri Castro died in 1865 and belatedly in 1876 his contribution to the settlement of Texas was recognized when a Texas county was named for him.

But how Jewish was Castro? Once source says he was very devout and even when on scouting trips would disappear into the woods early in the morning to put on his tephillin. On the other hand, Bryan Stone says that the family hadn't practiced Judaism for the last two centuries and mentions in an aside, there are no woods in the Castroville area. If it's worth anything, the article on Castro in Wikipedia calls him "a Jewish Texan".

In 1871 a relative wrote a history of his endeavor.

**<Image 19>**

And a marker in Castroville (2010 population-2680) recognizes his contribution to the founding of the town.

**<Image 20>**

The last in our group of early Jewish Texans takes us back to where we started, Waco and Jacob Raphael de Cordova.

**<Image 21>**

He was a multifaceted person. Born in Jamaica in 1808 his Mother died in childbirth and he was raised by an Aunt in England. At some point he rejoined his Father and then lived in Philadelphia. There his Father served as President of Congregation Mikve Israel. It is said that Jacob knew English, Spanish, French, German and Hebrew and enough of some Indian tongues to, with the help of signs, make himself understood. Among other occupations he published newspapers, one in Jamaica with his brother that is still in existence today and two in Texas with a half brother, in Houston and Austin.

Like Adolphus Sterne and so many others, he was a trader in New Orleans and provided supplies to the Texas army during the Revolution. In 1839 he moved to Texas and was elected to the Republic of Texas legislature for one term and became one of the biggest land agents in the state, at one time controlling over a million acres.



Among his activities was participating in laying out the town of Waco in 1849. The plan provided for public spaces to be allotted for schools, churches and parks.

To attract settlers de Cordova wrote a tract extolling the characteristics of the State.

**<Image 22>**

He also was involved with the production of the first official map of Texas whose praised Sam Houston extolled in a speech in the United States Senate. Houston also convinced the US to buy 500 copies of the map.

**<Image 23>**

In addition de Cordova produced an encyclopedia with information about the resources and leading figures in Texas.

**<Image 24>**

In his later years he suffered financial reverses but refused to foreclose on those indebted to him and died poor.

His wife wasn't Jewish and when they died they were buried in Kimball-Bosque County, north of Waco. In 1935 the graves were moved to the Texas State Cemetery in Austin. Unfortunately there is a cross on de Cordova's tombstone.

**<Image 25>**

In the 1950's an attempt was made to remove the cross but family members refused the request saying that he was "a truly religious individual" but "not a member of any specific church. So the cross remains.

About de Cordova's Jewishness one source says that he originated some of the first Jewish prayer services in Texas, knew the prayers for the High Holidays and the Sabbath by heart and was adept at Hebrew calligraphy, some of his Ketubot being in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. A search of the online catalogue of the Archives did turn up information on Jacob de Cordova, even business documents from some of his transactions conducted in the 1850's, but no listing for Ketubot. This doesn't necessarily mean that there aren't any, only that they don't appear in the online catalogue.

So we have seen that from the beginning of settlement in the area that would eventually be called Texas individuals considered Jews by one criteria or another were involved, but it wasn't until after Texas was admitted to the Union in December 1845 that organized Jewish life appeared in the State. In the 1850's in Galveston, Houston and San Antonio the first burial grounds were consecrated and then prayer services organized around the Hebrew Benevolent Societies (Hevra Kadisha) were established.

## SUGGESTED READING

### GENERAL TEXAS HISTORY

Richardson, Rupert N., et.al. *Texas: The Lone Star State*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. 2010

### JEWS IN TEXAS HISTORY

Barber, Alan. *David Kokernot: Rogue Soldier of the Texas Revolution*, 2012

Ornish, Natalie. *Pioneer Jewish Texans*. 1989

Stone, Bryan Edward. *The Chosen Folks; Jews on the Frontiers of Texas*, 2010

Toro, Alfonso. *The Carvajal Family*, 2002

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Castro, Lorenzo. *Immigration from Alsace and Lorraine: a Brief Sketch of the History of Castro's Colony in Western Texas*. 1871

De Cordova, Jacob. *Texas: Her Resources and Her Public Men*. 1858

Rapoport, Bernard, *Being Rapoport*, 2002

Sterne, Adolphus. *Hurrah for Texas! The Diary of Adolphus Sterne, 1838-1851*. 1969