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# Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, Operation Texas, and Jewish Immigration

by

Claudia Wilson Anderson\*

In 1963, Congregation Agudas Achim, the Conservative synagogue in Austin, Texas, invited Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson to dedicate a new sanctuary on Sunday, November 24. That week Johnson would be in Texas hosting a visit by President John F. Kennedy. Johnson accepted the invitation, but on November 22, Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Johnson became the thirty-sixth president of the United States. The congregation postponed its event while its members and the country mourned Kennedy's death. Johnson honored his commitment by speaking at the rescheduled dedication dinner on December 30, 1963.<sup>1</sup>

The dedication was remarkable. The chairman of the building committee, Jim Novy, delivered a short, cryptic speech introducing his long-time friend, Lyndon Johnson. Novy, an Austin businessman and Polish immigrant, had entered the United States through Galveston in 1913 at the age of sixteen.<sup>2</sup> He may have met Lyndon Johnson as early as 1932, when Johnson worked as an aide to Congressman Richard Kleberg of Corpus Christi. Novy knew Johnson well during the years LBJ served in the House of Representatives.<sup>3</sup>

In his introduction, Novy referred to forty-two people that Johnson helped bring out of Germany and Poland in 1938. He also referred to arrangements made through Johnson to lodge Jewish

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immigrants in National Youth Administration (NYA) camps in Texas.<sup>4</sup> The NYA was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to help bring the United States out of the Great Depression by employing and training youth. Novy then spoke of Johnson's ardent support for Israel.<sup>5</sup>

Lady Bird Johnson described the event in her diary: "as we started out of the synagogue, person after person plucked at my sleeve and said, 'I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for him. He helped me get out.' That both frightens you and makes you happy."<sup>6</sup>

*Dedication of Congregation Agudas Achim synagogue.  
President Lyndon B. Johnson (center) and Mrs. Johnson bow  
their heads at the dedication ceremony, Austin, Texas,  
December 30, 1963. Jim Novy is to Mrs. Johnson's right.  
(Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin, Texas. Photo by Yoichi Okamoto.)*

In 1989, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Texas, Louis Gomolak, discovered Novy's remarks while working on a dissertation about the depth of experience in foreign policy that Johnson brought to the presidency. Gomolak began exploring the close

relationship between Johnson, Novy, and the small Austin Jewish community. Relying heavily on Novy's speech introducing Johnson and on interviews Gomolak conducted with Novy's friends and family, Gomolak concluded that Johnson and Novy had participated in a joint effort that illegally brought hundreds of Jews into the United States through Galveston in the early 1940s, lodging them in NYA residences, and thus saving them from the Holocaust. Gomolak named this effort "Operation Texas."<sup>7</sup>

Several authors have drawn on Gomolak's work, incorporating the story into their books and articles.<sup>8</sup> A panel at the Houston Holocaust Museum highlights Operation Texas.<sup>9</sup> Book reviewer Lewis Gould criticized biographer Robert Caro for not pointing out that Johnson was "the clandestine supporter of efforts to aid Jewish refugees."<sup>10</sup> The story received a big boost when the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio posted an article by a retired professor from Oklahoma State University, Dr. James Smallwood, on its website. Although the article no longer appears on the institute's site, Operation Texas became a legend, and Smallwood wrote a longer article for the *East Texas Historical Journal* in 2009.<sup>11</sup>

Today distilled versions of the legend appear on the web where they receive wide circulation. There is even a move supported by Internet posts to have Lyndon Johnson named a "Righteous Gentile Among the Nations,"<sup>12</sup> a distinguished honor conferred by the organization Yad Vashem on those who risked their lives to save Jews from the Holocaust. Chain e-mails telling the story circulate among the Jewish community nationally, and the latest incarnation of these e-mails assures readers that Johnson was in fact Jewish.<sup>13</sup> A Google search for "Operation Texas," "Lyndon Johnson," and "Righteous Gentile" nets numerous hits, including an entry in Wikipedia, a reference in Facebook, and a blog.<sup>14</sup> The Lyndon B. Johnson Library and Museum (LBJ Library) in Austin repeatedly receives requests from people asking the archivists to provide documentation for Operation Texas. Johnson's congressional staff did not save his files dealing with immigration before and during World War II, and consequently the Johnson House of Representatives Papers at the LBJ Library include no

direct evidence of Johnson's assistance to Jewish refugees in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

The stories of Johnson's assistance to Jews and his relationship with the wider Jewish community are captivating, but they are based on Novy's speech at the synagogue dedication and a handful of interviews conducted by Louis Gomolak that Gomolak has not made public.

No author has adequately explained how Johnson and Novy could have successfully brought hundreds of Jews into the country illegally and then lodged and trained them in the NYA. Evidence available at repositories like the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) facility at College Park, Maryland, and the American Jewish Historical Society at the Center for Jewish History in New York City suggest Johnson had a strong concern for the Jewish community in Texas's Tenth Congressional District, but none shows that Johnson participated in an illegal operation involving hundreds of Jews. Drawing from careful research, this article demonstrates that the story, which has been repeated by so many authors that it now has the appearance of truth, originated with one source whose thesis and evidence are open to serious question.

### *Origins of the Story*

When Jim Novy introduced Lyndon Johnson at the dedication of Congregation Agudas Achim's new synagogue in December 1963, he told the congregation about the trip he and his son had made to Poland in 1938.

In 1938 President Johnson was a United States Congressman. During this year my son and I were to make a trip to Poland and Germany which he knew about. Before leaving, I was advised by President Johnson to get as many Jewish people as possible out of these countries, as times were going to become very difficult for them. The President gave me a personal letter of introduction to the American Embassy in Poland and called them long-distance to guarantee their support and see that anyone able to qualify as an immigrant be given a visa without delay. President Johnson also helped in getting the affidavits for these immi-



grants processed, and as a result, 42 people were brought out of Poland and Germany.<sup>15</sup>

Novy's notes continued:

In 1940 as chairman of the N.Y.A., President Johnson authorized bringing refugees to Texas from countries under the Hitler regime. The State of Texas, however, was not allowed to finance the resettlement of these refugees. Therefore, President Johnson made arrangements through Jessie [Jesse] Kellam, who was then in charge of the National Refugee Service for Texas, and myself for the Joint Distribution Committee to carry the finance of resettling the refugees, and for them to be lodged at the N.Y.A. camps all over Texas.<sup>16</sup>

It is these two paragraphs in Novy's remarks that have given rise to the legend of Operation Texas. According to the legend, LBJ and Novy used illegal maneuvers to bring hundreds of Jewish immigrants into the United States and then further illegally lodge them in NYA camps.<sup>17</sup>

*President Lyndon B. Johnson speaks at synagogue dedication.  
President Johnson, center at podium, with Lady Bird, with corsage  
seated to his lower right and Jim Novy to her right.  
(Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin, Texas. Photo by Dan Lewis.)*

*Jim Novy's Claims Revisited*

Novy's remarks about his trip to Germany and Poland in 1938 seem very straightforward, and yet no author has identified a single immigrant brought to the United States as a result of Novy's trip. Jim Novy's daughter remembers her father helping family members leave Poland, but these cases either occurred before Lyndon Johnson went to Congress or after World War II. She did remember a couple of German immigrants that her father set up in businesses in Austin, but did not know if they were helped by Lyndon Johnson or were among the forty-two Novy said in his speech were brought out of Europe as a result of his trip.<sup>18</sup>

Gomolak also cites a letter to Novy seeking help for a Jewish German mother and daughter, Adel and Fanny Gontschar.<sup>19</sup> He argues that Novy and Johnson worked behind the scenes to rescue the two and bring them into the United States, but Ancestry.com lists an Edel and Fanny Gontschar as survivors living together in Berlin in 1947.<sup>20</sup> Gomolak cites no evidence indicating this case was successful or that Johnson was actually involved.

Two additional sources, Novy's daughter and a newspaper account, help flesh out Novy's speech in 1963, but these accounts differ somewhat from the legend that has developed. *Aufbau*, a German language, Jewish newspaper published in New York, includes an account of a visit Novy made to the White House on March 15, 1965, with Dr. I. J. Carmin Karpman, editor of *Who's Who in World Jewry, 1965*, to present the president with the first copy of Karpman's book. Months later Karpman gave an account of the visit to an *Aufbau* reporter, who repeated it in *Der Zeitgeist*, a biweekly supplement to *Aufbau*. Karpman recounted the story of Novy's trip to Poland in 1938. According to the article, in 1938, Johnson warned Novy of the great dangers Hitler's policies posed for Jews in Poland and neighboring countries. Johnson had told Novy, "When you come back, bring a list of the names of your friends and relatives. I'll see to it that they can immigrate to the United States. The author of the article, identified only as G. Sw.,<sup>21</sup> states Novy passed along Johnson's message, but "ran up against stubborn resistance" in Poland. In spite of the resistance, Novy

gave a list to Johnson. The article continues, "When war broke out, 42 of those on the list were able to leave Poland, and, via Cuba, reach the United States or Palestine."<sup>22</sup>

Elaine Shapiro, Novy's daughter, has stated that most of Novy's family did not want to leave when he offered to get them visas in 1938. They refused to believe that things would get worse. This corresponds with the account in *Aufbau*. Shapiro also said that several relatives did end up in Palestine rather than the United States, but they went to Palestine after surviving the Holocaust.<sup>23</sup>

Following his remarks about his trip to Europe, Novy discussed an arrangement with the NYA to shelter recent immigrants. Novy's remarks are somewhat confused and need clarification because he mixed up names and positions. Novy referred to Johnson as chairman of the NYA in 1940. Johnson had been the state director of the Texas NYA before going to Congress in 1937. Although he was no longer with the NYA in 1940, he had continued to maintain close contacts with his hand-picked replacement, Jesse Kellam. If the NYA sheltered Jewish immigrants, Johnson likely would have known about it and could have even engineered the arrangement. Novy represented the National Refugee Service (NRS) in its dealings with the NYA. Novy also mentioned his relationship with the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), another refugee organization, but it does not appear that the JDC was involved in the NYA arrangement.

According to an article in the *Texas Jewish Press* describing the organizational meeting of the Texas NRS in San Antonio, Novy presented an NYA report at the luncheon session of the 1940 meeting.<sup>24</sup> A memo from the records of the NRS outlines the arrangement with the NYA that Novy would have described in his report. According to the "Memorandum on Texas for the State Meeting in San Antonio on October 20, 1940," an arrangement between the NRS and the NYA had been completed in December 1939. The memo indicates:

This program was effected last December with the NYA administrator allowing 25 places to us. The project has not taken on State dimension or even regional. What we have done is gotten

cities such as Houston to underwrite a given number and sending boys to projects near Houston. Dallas has agreed to finance 5 boys but none have been sent because there are no projects near Dallas. Austin, while not underwriting any has assumed administrative responsibility because the NYA State headquarters are in Austin. Jim Novy of Austin, former chairman of our Committee is a friend of the NYA administrator and therefore became liaison for the National Refugee Service and the NYA.<sup>25</sup>

A chart attached to the memo shows the distribution of the twelve individuals in the NYA program at the time of the meeting: seven in Austin, three in Houston and two in South Houston.<sup>26</sup>

The file in the NRS records also includes a letter dated in April 1940 from the executive director of the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Houston, J. B. Lightman. In the letter, Lightman indicates that the Houston Jewish community undertook the sponsorship of up to ten boys at a cost of \$1,500. Lightman describes a visit to the NYA camp in South Houston and provides insights into life at the camp and the community's support for the three boys at the retraining resident project: "[We] learned from the refugee boys that when they first came there they thought the meal they ate was especially prepared for them, but they were delightfully surprised to find that every meal was of the same fine caliber." The letter also indicates "arrangements with the N.Y.A. Project for permission for the boys to come into the city for one of the Passover Sedars [*sic*]."<sup>27</sup>

Was placing recent immigrants in the NYA illegal as is alleged in stories about Operation Texas? Since the project was under the auspices of the NRS and involved only a handful of immigrants, it seems very likely that these young men had legally immigrated to the United States. In his research into Jewish communities in Alabama, historian Dan Puckett shows that refugee committees throughout that state sponsored ten young men at the NYA training facility in Gadsden, Alabama.<sup>28</sup> This mirrored the Texas arrangement and suggests that the arrangement was far from unique.

In January 1936, an editorial in the *Saturday Evening Post* by conservative journalist Raymond G. Carroll decried the use of New Deal programs to aid immigrants to the United States.<sup>29</sup> Among the programs Carroll specifically mentioned was the NYA. Apparently, journalists knew these programs were available to aliens, and, although Carroll considered it an abuse of the program, he did not question its legality. Furthermore, a November 17, 1938, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) memorandum, describing relevant factors to be considered when judging whether an alien's deportation should be stayed, directs that "aliens who have been employed on W.P.A. projects should not be considered as public charges."<sup>30</sup> Apparently, the INS was not disturbed that aliens were employed in New Deal projects.

Because Johnson continued to maintain regular contact with Jesse Kellam and monitored Texas NYA activities closely, he may well have been involved in the NRS's arrangement with Kellam. Obviously, the leadership of the Texas NYA was concerned about these new residents of Texas; however, the number involved was far more modest than has been alleged. The figures cited in the NRS records place the total in the low double digits rather than the hundreds.

If Johnson did help Jewish refugees come to the United States, how did he accomplish it? Who and how many were the immigrants helped by Johnson? Although Johnson's House of Representatives Papers contained nothing on immigration cases before the end of World War II, there are clues in oral history transcripts at the LBJ Library and in State Department records and records of the State Department's Foreign Service posts found at the National Archives, particularly those dealing with Cuba and Mexico.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, the only case Johnson discussed with his friends and associates was one involving Erich Leinsdorf, a young conductor from Austria.

#### *The National Origins Quota System and the Erich Leinsdorf Case*

In 1937, a talented young Jewish conductor from Austria, Erich Leinsdorf, came to the United States on a temporary, six-month visa to serve as an assistant conductor for the Metropolitan

Opera. The six months neared its end, and the INS, the entity regulating immigrants once inside the United States, would not renew his visa. By this time the Nazis had taken over Austria, and Leinsdorf could not safely return. He sought help from his friends Charles and Alice Marsh. Charles Marsh owned a chain of newspapers including one in Austin, and the couple had become close friends of Lyndon Johnson. Marsh sought the congressman's help in getting Leinsdorf a permanent visa.<sup>32</sup>

To understand the obstacles faced by immigrants trying to enter the United States and the means available for Johnson to assist individual refugees, it is necessary to understand the intricate immigration bureaucracy in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Congress limited immigration from countries outside the hemisphere through the National Origins Quota System that established country-by-country quotas in direct proportion to the number of persons of a particular national origin in the United States in 1920. The law limited total immigration under the quotas to approximately 154,000. Because a large portion of the population in the United States in 1920 had come from Great Britain, Germany, and Ireland, the law favored immigrants from these countries but severely discriminated against immigrants from the rest of Europe, Asia, and Africa.<sup>33</sup> Over half of the available quota numbers were assigned to Great Britain and Ireland where people were not trying to flee.<sup>34</sup> Quotas from these two countries went unused, but under the law, the quotas could not be transferred to immigrants from other countries. After Germany annexed Austria in 1938, President Roosevelt ordered the combining of German and Austrian quotas, thereby relieving some of the pressure on the smaller Austrian quota.<sup>35</sup>

When Marsh asked Lyndon Johnson to help Leinsdorf, Johnson's goal would have been to have a quota number assigned to Leinsdorf, allowing him to enter as permanent resident. The law required prospective immigrants to enter under the quota of their country of birth even if they had become residents or citizens of another country, such as Mexico or Cuba.<sup>36</sup> American consuls controlled the allocation of quota numbers, examining applicants and determining whether they should be given a visa, and they

exercised wide latitude in determining suitable candidates for visas. Evidence suggests that some consuls placed roadblocks in the paths of Jews seeking U.S. visas, leading to charges of overt anti-semitism within the State Department.<sup>37</sup> Jewish visa applicants in the 1930s discovered which consuls were more likely to approve visas.<sup>38</sup>

In 1938, it was well known among the Jewish community and on Capitol Hill that it was not difficult to obtain entrance visas to Cuba. Refugees entered Cuba and waited until they were able to obtain visas and enter the United States.<sup>39</sup> The American consul in Havana, Cuba, Coert Du Bois, worked sympathetically with Jewish refugees, eventually even letting staff from the JDC assist the consulate with the processing of paperwork.<sup>40</sup> As Erich Leinsdorf described in his autobiography, Johnson first got the INS to extend the temporary visa for six months. Johnson then asked Du Bois to help Leinsdorf.<sup>41</sup> The American consul's records show that at this time Du Bois regularly requested and received block quota number allotments for Germans/Austrians from the American consul in Germany.<sup>42</sup> Leinsdorf traveled to Cuba, received a visa under the German/Austrian quota, and returned to the United States seven days later as a permanent resident.<sup>43</sup>

Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas contacted Secretary of State Cordell Hull probably at Marsh's behest. The State Department advised Sheppard to have Leinsdorf go to another country and apply for entrance under the German/Austrian quota.<sup>44</sup> With Johnson's help, Leinsdorf did exactly that.

Johnson's assistance to Leinsdorf on immigration matters did not end with his trip through Cuba. Leinsdorf later brought his mother and her sister, as well as a cousin and the cousin's wife, into the United States.<sup>45</sup> Johnson addressed inquiries to the State Department on behalf of Leinsdorf's mother and aunt.<sup>46</sup> In December 1944, Leinsdorf asked Johnson for a letter of reference when he wanted to sponsor two refugees he had met in Cuba. In the letter, Johnson wrote, "In short, Erich Leinsdorf always has a blank check with my name signed to it because he is possessed with the qualities that justify his being called a great American."<sup>47</sup>

*Erich Leinsdorf (left) with President Johnson,  
at the White House, January 30, 1958.  
Aide Doug Cater is in the background.  
(Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin Texas. Photo by Yoichi Okamoto.)*

Johnson's friendship with Leinsdorf lasted through the years. When he signed the landmark Immigration Act of 1965, ending the highly discriminatory National Origins Quota System, then-President Johnson invited Leinsdorf to attend the ceremony.<sup>48</sup> The act eliminated the quota system that had excluded so many Jews from the country and changed it to a system of selection based on an immigrant's special skills, family relationship to U.S. citizens, or the need for political asylum.<sup>49</sup>

The Leinsdorf case is well-known within Johnson's circle of friends and in published works. Mrs. Johnson even alludes to it in her published diary.<sup>50</sup> However, Johnson's help in this case could be attributed to a political motive, the opportunity to do a favor



*President Johnson signs the Immigration Act, October 3, 1965.  
The signing took place on Liberty Island, New York City.  
(Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin Texas. Photo by Yoichi Okamoto.)*

for Charles Marsh, a close friend and influential publisher. Evidence of Johnson's help in other immigration cases discloses a pattern of assistance and reveals his tactics.

*Johnson Intercedes for Jewish Constituents*

Johnson used the Leinsdorf model in another case in 1938, this time at Jim Novy's request. Gela Nowodworski, the widow of Jim Novy's brother, Sam, had entered Mexico from Poland years before Johnson became a congressman.<sup>51</sup> Johnson, after being elected to Congress, helped Gela and two of her three sons emigrate together from Mexico to Texas. Gela and the two sons obtained quota numbers under the Polish quota. Jim booked passage for them on a ship to New Orleans. When they arrived in

New Orleans, the immigration inspectors determined their paperwork was not done properly and excluded them. One of Gela's sons, Michael Nowodworski, told the story on videotape at a Novy family reunion. He said Jim Novy was waiting in New Orleans, and when the family was not allowed to enter the country, Novy called Johnson. Johnson directed Novy to put them on a boat to Havana, which he did. Just as in the Leinsdorf case, the American consul in Havana got their papers in order.<sup>52</sup> The family returned to New Orleans a little less than one month later and entered the country in July 1938.<sup>53</sup> Johnson also helped the third son enter. In a letter to Johnson in 1945, Jim Novy asked for help getting citizenship papers for one of the boys. Novy identifies his nephew: "[He] is one of the three Novy boys whom you helped bring to this country from Mexico."<sup>54</sup>

Another case proved difficult and ultimately failed because war broke out before the ship to the United States set sail, but it illustrates Johnson's methodology. In 1996, Rabbi Abram Vossen Goodman came to the LBJ Library and told the staff that Johnson had tried to help him get his cousin, Hermann Winter, out of Germany in 1938 and 1939. Goodman agreed to do an oral history and to give the library correspondence he had saved about the case. However, he did not have the letters LBJ had sent him. In this case, though, correspondence exists in the Records of the State Department Visa Division at NARA. In this heartbreaking story, Goodman sought and received Johnson's aid. Winter had written Goodman in 1937 asking for help fleeing Germany for the United States. Goodman contacted Johnson immediately. Soon after *Kristallnacht*, Winter sent a cable to Goodman indicating that he had been arrested and was in Dachau. Winter was released from Dachau, but had to promise to leave Germany. According to Goodman, Johnson first planned to have Winter go to Havana where he could eventually get a quota number and enter the United States. Unable to arrange this, LBJ suggested an alternate plan that would have taken Winter through Mexico.<sup>55</sup> Johnson probably abandoned the original plan because, in May 1939, the Cuban government changed its prior fairly open policy on the admission of Jewish refugees, and seriously restricted the number of visas

granted to refugees. On May 27, in a very public policy reversal, the Cuban government allowed only a few of the 937 refugees who arrived in Havana aboard the German liner the *SS St. Louis* to disembark, in spite of the fact that most held Cuban entry visas.<sup>56</sup>

In November 1938, Johnson wrote to the assistant secretary of state seeking help. Staff apparently answered the inquiry by phone and no action resulted. In April 1939, Johnson wrote to the American ambassador to Mexico, Josephus Daniels, and asked him to talk to the Mexican authorities and request that they expedite the granting of a temporary permit for Winter to enter Mexico. In his letter, LBJ assured the ambassador of Goodman's stability and worthiness; "He is one of our finest and most esteemed citizens in Austin."<sup>57</sup>

After receiving Johnson's letter, Daniels wrote to the secretary of state asking if changes were under way which would allow him to give assurances to the Mexican authorities that such immigrants would be admitted to the United States when their quota numbers were reached. George Messersmith, assistant secretary of state, responded, "While the difficult position of persons in Central European countries who find it necessary to emigrate to other countries and who desire to come to the United States eventually is appreciated, there is no way under the law by which an American consular officer may give an assurance that any applicant on the waiting list will be found at some future date to qualify for a visa, since the qualification of an alien for a visa can only be determined when his turn is reached for final consideration."<sup>58</sup>

Johnson encouraged Goodman to work actively on the case.<sup>59</sup> Goodman then consulted the Mexican consul in San Antonio and wrote to the Mexican Ministry of the Interior, which was in charge of immigration into Mexico, hoping to arrange a Mexican visa for Winter.<sup>60</sup> Goodman also contacted the National Coordinating Committee for Aid to Refugees and Emigrants Coming from Germany that was based in New York City.<sup>61</sup>

Goodman says in his oral history that Johnson "couldn't get him [Winter] into the United States, but he could get him into Mexico." Johnson made a reservation for Winter on a steamer

going from Hamburg to Tampico, Mexico, scheduled to leave on September 1, 1939. It did not sail because of Hitler's invasion of Poland that day. Failing in his attempt to depart Germany, Winter died in a forced labor camp during the war.<sup>62</sup>

Immigrant Alfred Rosenthal insists Johnson helped him enter the United States. Rosenthal, now in his nineties, grew up in Cologne, Germany. In 1938 he was arrested and taken to Dachau.<sup>63</sup> Rosenthal's father had previously connected with a family in Austin through the Jewish War Veterans, and the family asked Harold Eichenbaum, an Austin prop designer for theaters and a professional associate of Louis Novy, to help Rosenthal leave Germany. Louis Novy, Jim Novy's brother, was a well-known businessman who operated several movie theaters including one on Austin's main downtown street. Eichenbaum asked him to sponsor Rosenthal's entrance into the United States. Eichenbaum sent Rosenthal a letter promising assistance, and Rosenthal was able to secure release from Dachau. His mother purchased a ticket for him on a ship going from Amsterdam to Trinidad, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in Amsterdam helped him secure an entry visa for Trinidad.<sup>64</sup>

While in Trinidad, the American consul helped Rosenthal obtain a job, and he was then able to bring his mother and sister out of Germany and have them join him in Trinidad. JDC representatives greeted Rosenthal when he entered New York from Trinidad on December 9, 1940, under the German quota.<sup>65</sup> He was soon on the bus to Austin where Eichenbaum met him and quickly introduced Rosenthal to his sponsor. Novy helped him secure a job with the *Austin Tribune*, and a year later, Rosenthal sponsored his mother and sister by bringing them from Trinidad to Austin through New York City.<sup>66</sup> Jim Novy had written the State Department about the immigration of Rosenthal's mother.<sup>67</sup>

Rosenthal does not know how Johnson facilitated this process but firmly believes the Novys asked Johnson for help. A cryptic letter does connect Johnson to the immigrant family. A mutual friend of the Rosenthals and Lyndon Johnson, Eugenia Boehringer Lasseter (she had introduced Lady Bird Johnson to Lyndon Johnson) wrote to Lyndon Johnson, referring to a conver-

sation she had with Rosenthal's sister, Margot Schwartz. The letter begins, "You will remember having helped the Rosenthals in Austin."<sup>68</sup> This letter may refer to help Johnson gave the family after they were "in Austin," or the phrase may be meant to distinguish the Rosenthals from other Rosenthals in central Texas. In any event, the story illustrates how closely help from the Novy brothers was linked to Lyndon Johnson in the minds of the Jewish community and may partially explain the community's readiness to attribute successful immigration cases to Johnson.

*Gathering at Jim Novy's Lake House, September 1943.*

*Alfred Rosenthal, as a freelance photographer, took this photo.*

*In attendance were Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, a few of his associates, and Jewish businessmen from Austin. Johnson, wearing bow tie, is sixth from right, standing below. Jim Novy is on LBJ's left, Louis Novy on his right.*

*(Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin, Texas. Photo by Alfred Rosenthal.)*

In the Leinsdorf, Nowodworski, and Rosenthal cases, the consuls in “transit” countries in the Western Hemisphere arranged U.S. visas for immigrants who had been able to leave Europe without Johnson’s help. In the unsuccessful Winter case, Johnson was involved in developing the strategy for Winter to escape Germany, but the plan was for Winter to go to Mexico where Johnson was lobbying a U.S. consul for assistance. The case of the Deutsch family provides an example in which Johnson helped a constituent’s relatives come directly from Europe to the United States. Leon Schmidt of Austin recalls that Johnson helped his father, Jacob Schmidt, bring his wife’s sister, Lea Deutsch, her husband, Andor, and their son, Miklos, to Austin from Hungary.<sup>69</sup> Jacob Schmidt, a merchant in Austin and member of Congregation Agudas Achim, had been a merchant in the small town of San Marcos, Texas, when Johnson was a college student there.<sup>70</sup> In February 1939, Jacob’s in-laws left a port in France and entered New York under the Hungarian quota.<sup>71</sup>

These cases demonstrate Johnson’s deep interest in the Austin Jewish community, but provide no evidence to corroborate stories that he illegally helped Jewish immigrants come to Texas. His actions are similar to those of other congressmen who lobbied the State Department and consular officials for special consideration for their constituents’ relatives, and they raise the question of whether Johnson took actions to change immigration through legislation. Little appears on the Internet or in print related to his pre-presidential positions on immigration legislation. Johnson accumulated a mixed record on immigration, beginning with his first roll-call vote in the House.

*LBJ, the Legislator*

When Austin congressman James Buchanan died, Lyndon Johnson won a special election to replace him as the U.S. Representative from Texas’s Tenth District. Johnson was sworn in on May 13, 1937. Just five days later, the House considered an omnibus immigration bill, H.R. 5897, which would have stopped the deportation of fifteen immigrants, most of whom were Jews from eastern Europe who had obtained entry to the country by paying

dishonest consular officials for false visas. By 1937 the immigrants had been in the United States for years, had families and businesses, and were model residents.<sup>72</sup> Johnson's first roll-call vote was on a motion involving this bill. Some authors have described Johnson's vote as a moral stand in favor of Jewish immigrants.<sup>73</sup> But that is not the full story. There were three roll-call votes related to the bill on that day; all were votes on motions proposed by congressmen who opposed the bill.

The opponents of the immigration bill, mostly southern Democrats and a few Republicans, engaged in parliamentary tactics to kill the legislation. First, Representative Joe Starnes of Alabama moved to strike the enacting clause in an attempt to gut the bill. Johnson voted "no" with the majority, thus aligning himself with the supporters of the bill. Next, Congressman Charles Halleck (R-IN) introduced an amendment requiring one of the immigrants to leave the country and return legally in order to be eligible for U.S. citizenship. Again Johnson voted "no" with the majority to preserve the bill. The House continued debating the bill into the late afternoon. As five o'clock approached, Congressman John Rankin of Mississippi, who opposed the bill, made a motion to adjourn declaring that action on the measure could not be completed during that day's session. This time, Johnson and others switched sides, and Rankin's motion to adjourn passed, thus ending consideration of the bill. According to the *New York Times*, under House rules, the bill could not be considered again for a month. It was not brought up again in that session of Congress.<sup>74</sup> Accounts of Johnson's votes in support of the bill fail to mention that on the last vote of the day Johnson voted with the majority to end debate on the bill, and the bill died.<sup>75</sup>

It may be a mistake to read too much into this switch without knowing why Johnson changed sides. Perhaps he and colleagues who switched realized that the bill would continue to be delayed and debating into the night would be futile. Whatever the reason for Johnson's vote to adjourn, those interested in the evolution of Johnson's support of Jewish immigration should be aware of the full story. Asserting that Johnson's first roll-call vote was a vote on

behalf of immigrants is technically true.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless, authors undermine their credibility when they point to his first vote as a principled vote in favor of Jewish immigration without disclosing Johnson's reversal at the end of the day, and the bill's ultimate failure.

Johnson's next vote on an immigration bill came in 1939 against H.R. 5643, a harsh bill proposed by the restrictionist Congressman Samuel Hobbs of Alabama. Opponents charged that the bill allowed the secretary of labor to order the indefinite detention of an alien if he had violated U.S. law, been ordered deported, and was unable to leave the country because he lacked a valid passport or other papers to return to his country of origin. The detention order could be appealed to a circuit court but not the Supreme Court. In spite of Johnson's vote against the bill, it passed the House, but it did not reach a vote in the Senate.<sup>77</sup>

In 1948, Johnson's last year in the House of Representatives, Congress considered the Displaced Persons bill, which provided for the admission of 202,000 displaced persons over the following two years. He was absent for the vote and was recorded as a General Pair in the *Congressional Record*.<sup>78</sup> During the vote, which was overwhelmingly in favor of the bill, Johnson was in Texas campaigning in a tough primary battle to be the Democratic Party's candidate for the Senate.<sup>79</sup> The House and Senate both passed the bill, and President Truman signed it into law.<sup>80</sup> In 1950 another Displaced Persons bill passed by a substantial margin. This time Johnson was serving in the Senate, but again was absent for the bill's passage, although he apparently supported the bill.<sup>81</sup> Johnson and his wife were on a brief car trip after the strain of getting a gas bill through the House and Senate.<sup>82</sup>

Probably the most well-known immigration bill considered by the Senate in the 1950s was the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act. Although the bill had several positive provisions, it maintained the controversial quota system based on the 1920 census and broadened the grounds for exclusion and deportation of aliens. The bill passed but was vetoed by President Truman, who called it discriminatory in a strongly worded statement. Congress then overrode the



veto.<sup>83</sup> Probably the most difficult to understand of Johnson's immigration votes were his votes related to this bill. Not only did he vote for the passage of the bill and to override Truman's veto, he voted against a much more moderate substitute bill proposed by senators Hubert Humphrey and Herbert Lehman.<sup>84</sup> The Humphrey-Lehman bill would have liberalized the quota system by changing the basis for quotas from 1920 to 1950, and it would have authorized unused quotas to be "pooled" and used by countries with small quotas. Numerous Jewish organizations endorsed the Humphrey-Lehman bill, including HIAS and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.<sup>85</sup> Johnson made no statements explaining his votes,<sup>86</sup> but they were probably cast out of political expediency. Two years later, Johnson would be facing reelection to his Senate seat after an extremely narrow victory in 1948, and his Texas constituency was very conservative on immigration matters. Although the House voted by a comfortable margin to override the president's veto, the Senate overrode the veto by only two votes, and the proposal became law.<sup>87</sup>

In 1953, Johnson became the Senate minority leader, and he supported an immigration bill that allowed over two hundred thousand non-quota visas to be issued over a three-year period. The bill passed with help from Johnson. Soon after passage, he wrote to a Texas constituent, "I do not know where TIME Magazine or anyone else got the idea that I 'guided' the Immigration Bill through the Senate."<sup>88</sup> He supported the bill but felt it necessary to distance himself from its passage. Johnson's opponent in the 1954 Democratic primary election, Dudley Dougherty, criticized the vote claiming those to be admitted were "escapees and expellees among the millions of that class now in Europe." He further claimed the immigrants would deprive men and women in Texas of jobs and would "gum up the housing situation."<sup>89</sup>

By 1957, when another immigration bill came before the Senate, Johnson, now the Senate majority leader, again provided leadership. Among its many provisions, S. 2792 permitted unlimited entry of alien orphans under fourteen who had been adopted by U.S. citizens, provided relief for oversubscribed

eastern European quotas, and provided relief to German expellees, Dutch refugees, and others fleeing persecution. Eisenhower signed the measure but expressed disappointment that the bill did not do more to correct inequities in the immigration system.<sup>90</sup> Johnson, too, disclosed disappointment in the bill. He received a telegram from Eleanor Roosevelt citing the bill as evidence of his leadership, and he responded, "The measure is not all I hoped to accomplish, but it does represent a step forward toward the solution of a problem which has brought unhappiness to many people."<sup>91</sup>

With the exception of the McCarran-Walter Act, Johnson's voting record generally favored liberalizing the immigration process and admitting larger numbers of European refugees. Although he was absent for votes in 1948 and 1950 on Displaced Persons legislation, those bills passed easily, and his vote was not needed. Once he became the Democratic leader in the Senate, he actively supported reforms, a preface to his later support of the 1965 Immigration Act. What caused Johnson's empathy for Jewish refugees and led him to support immigration reform when most legislators from the former Confederacy opposed these measures?

#### *Johnson's Motivational Factors*

Lyndon Johnson grew up in an environment where Jews held a special place. His grandfather and aunt belonged to the Christadelphian religious sect, a fundamentalist Christian group that believes Israel will be returned to the Jews, and, when Christ returns to earth in the Second Coming, he will establish the Kingdom of God in Israel.<sup>92</sup> It is difficult to measure how much this factor influenced Johnson, but it does indicate that he could have been introduced to Christian Zionist sentiments at an early age. An oral history interview with his Aunt Jessie Hatcher supports this conclusion.<sup>93</sup> Johnson's father, Sam Ealy Johnson, Jr., who served in the Texas legislature as a populist Democrat, no doubt also had a strong influence on his son. Sam Johnson opposed the Ku Klux Klan's intolerant racial and religious views.<sup>94</sup>

An early indication of Johnson's interest in immigration appears in an undated letter to his mother written while Johnson was an aide to Congressman Kleberg, probably in 1932.<sup>95</sup> Johnson explains that he is working on immigration cases and making pleas for stays of deportation. He ends his description with "Its [*sic*] all quite interesting and in addition quite an instruction."<sup>96</sup> Very early in his career, LBJ was learning the ins and outs of the immigration bureaucracy.

Johnson also understood the dangers inherent in Nazism and had serious concerns about the situation in Germany as early as the fall of 1934. That fall, as previously mentioned, through a mutual friend, Eugenia Boehringer, Lyndon Johnson first met Lady Bird Taylor in Austin. He arranged to have breakfast with her the next morning. They spent the day together; and he reportedly proposed marriage before day's end. They married about ten weeks later. During their courtship, Johnson gave Lady Bird a book with an inscription dated September 1, 1934, probably the day of their first date and his proposal.<sup>97</sup> The book, *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization*, was a collection of essays edited by Pierre Van Paassen and James Waterman Wise, a very serious book to give to a young woman a man is courting.<sup>98</sup>

In an interview, Dr. Mathilde Krim, who is a research scientist and the wife of Arthur Krim, the former chairman of United Artists and a prominent Democratic fundraiser, discussed Johnson's empathy for Jews. This Jewish couple became close friends of the Johnsons after Kennedy died, and they spent many hours with them during the White House years and thereafter. Dr. Krim believes that Johnson met Jews early in his career who shaped his views. She observed that he did not associate Jews with particular beliefs or doctrines; rather he had recognized in them the qualities of high intelligence, decency, and strong ethics. Johnson then attributed these qualities to the wider Jewish community. Dr. Krim had asked Johnson about his feelings regarding Jews. She said, "First of all, he thinks that Jews are very smart. . . . He made this determination on the basis of his relationships, or operations, with certain Jews who lived in Austin or in his area of the world." Johnson mentioned the originator of the western hats that he

*The book by Pierre Van Paassen and James Waterman Wise that LBJ gave to Lady Bird when they were courting and the inscription he wrote within: "9/1/34, To Bird – In the hope within these pages she may realize some little entertainment and find reiterated here some of the principles in which she believes and which she has been taught to revere and respect – LBJ"*  
(Courtesy of LBJ Library, Austin, Texas.)

wore, Harry Rolnick, of the Resistol hat company. She continued, "Johnson would say, 'I admire this man,' . . . because he was a very decent person in his eyes."<sup>99</sup>

Krim also suggested that Johnson had a natural connection with the oppressed and underprivileged. She referred to Tom Segev's 1967: *Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East*, in which the author writes that Dr. Krim told him Johnson appreciated people who had made it the hard way, because he, too, had faced discrimination and had worked hard to get where he was. Segev recounts that the Krims thought Johnson identified with Jews and with Israel much as he did with the plight of African Americans and the poor.<sup>100</sup>

Harry McPherson, a long-time Johnson associate who began serving as an aide to Johnson while Johnson was in the Senate, is another key source. In spite of being Episcopalian, he served as a liaison between the American Jewish community and the Johnson White House. McPherson spoke of a conversation with his friend, Michael Janeway, a Columbia University journalism professor and son of Eliot Janeway, an economist and journalist, who became a friend and adviser to Johnson early in Johnson's career. Michael Janeway suggested Johnson's assistance to Jews could be linked to the friends Johnson made when he came to Washington in the 1930s. The circle of young New Dealers rotated around Harold Ickes, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's secretary of the interior. Ickes was very aware of the plight of European Jews and championed plans to settle Jewish refugees in American territories such as Alaska and the Virgin Islands.<sup>101</sup> Members of this circle included bright young Jewish attorneys like Abe Fortas, who became a particularly close Johnson friend and advisor. McPherson believed that through these relationships, Johnson knew numerous attorneys who worked for the government and could assist him. McPherson also observed that Johnson recognized when people needed help and was strongly inclined to use the power of government to aid them. Having so many friends in government no doubt enabled him to effectively help his constituents negotiate the government's bureaucracy, including Jewish constituents needing assistance with immigration.<sup>102</sup>

### *Conclusions and Methodology*

Soon after Gomolak finished his dissertation in 1989, I began to wonder how Johnson could have bypassed the government's bureaucracy and participated in an illegal operation that would not come to light for so many years after his death. I became fascinated by this possibility and began looking for documents that would clarify Johnson's role. I had worked as an archivist at the LBJ Library for twenty years but had seen nothing in Johnson's papers about Operation Texas. Finding evidence of Johnson's efforts to assist refugees is a challenge. My research journey began with the National Archives facility in

College Park, Maryland, to view State Department records, particularly the records of the American consuls in Cuba, Mexico, and Trinidad. These records revealed that Lyndon Johnson was one of many congressmen who contacted these officials on behalf of refugees.

The American Jewish Historical Society in New York City holds the records of the NRS. The collection includes several key documents clearly explaining the relationship between the NRS, the Texas NYA, and Jim Novy. The plans outlined in the NRS correspondence for twenty-five immigrants to be housed and trained in NYA facilities perfectly fit the description in Novy's speech at the synagogue.

At the Dolph Briscoe Center at the University of Texas, I consulted the Papers of Henry Cohen, the Galveston rabbi who met the boats bringing European immigrants to Texas in the early twentieth century. Cohen was the acknowledged local leader of the Galveston Plan and other programs to divert Jewish immigrants from New York through Texas. The rabbi was present when Jim Novy disembarked in Galveston in 1913, and he continued active service in Galveston until his retirement in 1949. The Cohen Papers included instructions typed in 1941 for securing Cuban visas for European refugees, confirming that it was well-known among Texas Jews that Cuba could provide a safe haven for refugees hoping to eventually enter the United States. The collection does not contain any correspondence with Jim Novy or others about a large-scale effort to bring Jews into Texas through Galveston during the years of Hitler's persecution.<sup>103</sup> If Operation Texas took place, surely Cohen would have been involved or at least been informed.

In addition to archival research, I attempted to find members of the Jewish community in Texas who might know of Lyndon Johnson's efforts. In 2002, I wrote a brief article for the newsletter of the Texas Jewish Historical Society outlining the legend and describing what I had been able to verify. At the end of the article, I asked anyone who had information to contact me and said that I would give their stories to the LBJ Library. No one came forward.

In December 2002, a member of Congregation Agudas Achim made arrangements for me to view the small archive at the synagogue related to the 1963 dedication. Unfortunately, it shed no clues on the identities of those Johnson helped, but it was an opportunity to establish contact with people in the congregation. In 2005, I received an invitation to speak to a group at Congregation Agudas Achim who were interested in Johnson. I asked the congregants who came to hear my talk to spread the word in the Austin Jewish community that I was looking for evidence of Johnson's assistance, both for my own research and to enhance the information available at the LBJ Library. Although members of the congregation were familiar with Gomolak's work, none could give me the names of immigrants helped by Johnson.

Over the years, I talked with several Novy relatives. While Novy's relatives were sure Novy and Johnson worked together to help immigrants enter the country, they were not sure there was an illegal operation, nor did they know how such an operation would have been accomplished. Novy's daughter knew of several people that her father helped, but they entered the country legally.

It is clear from federal records and from the testimony of a few people who were close to Johnson and Novy that Johnson played a role in the immigration of a number of Jewish refugees. As the examples illustrate, he contacted American consuls directly and through the Visa Division at the State Department to apply pressure for action. He vouched for sponsors by writing letters of recommendation and suggested strategies for bringing immigrants through transit countries. Some authors argue Johnson and Novy smuggled refugees into Texas through Galveston, but immigration officials met each ship coming from Europe and evading them would have been difficult. Manifests in Ancestry.com show that paying passengers had entry papers when they boarded the ship, and immigration inspectors refused to admit stowaways to the United States. Some authors may believe Johnson secured admittance for refugees under quotas from countries other than those of their births, yet no examples exist showing Johnson could do this. There is simply no evidence suggesting that Johnson acted illegally. Authors who allege that he was

behind an illegal effort to bring Jews in the country bear responsibility for showing what he did that was illegal, how this was done, and how he avoided detection.

The files of the American consuls in Mexico, Cuba, and Trinidad contain abundant evidence of congressional interest in Jewish immigration. Virtually hundreds of letters from members of Congress urging consuls to grant visas to Jewish refugees survive in the Mexico files alone. Johnson's letters on behalf of Rabbi Goodman's cousin, Hermann Winter, are heartbreaking and earnest, but not unique. The objective conclusion is that Johnson was one of a number of sympathetic congressmen and senators who lobbied American consuls in behalf of constituents.<sup>104</sup>

When asked in an oral history about Johnson's efforts to aid Jews, Lady Bird Johnson said, "I just remember that from our earliest days he had a lot of good Jewish friends, particularly the Novys in Austin. They went to bat for him, asked or unasked, and he for them. Yes. It began to get frightening and terrible in Germany. There were lots of people in our district who had relatives over there who were trying to get them out. He did work with great sympathy and determination on that." When asked if Johnson worked through the INS or at a higher level, Mrs. Johnson replied, "Frankly I don't know. I just know he worked persistently. Whatever was the way to do it, he was likely to find out that way and just have at it."<sup>105</sup> Her statement illustrates what is well known. Johnson had a strong reputation for constituent case work and aggressively pursued cases. Although Johnson's efforts may not have been unique, he used the political powers available to him as a congressman to do what he could to help the Jews in his congressional district. The correspondence in the Winter case files in the records of the American ambassador in Mexico indicates that Johnson asked the ambassador to intercede with Mexican officials on behalf of Winter. It is unusual to see a congressman this persistent in his correspondence.

I spoke with Harry Middleton, a White House speechwriter who accompanied Johnson back to Austin when he left office. Middleton helped Johnson write his memoir, *The Vantage Point*,



and later became the director of the LBJ Library. I also interviewed Harry McPherson, the White House aide who served as Johnson's liaison with the Jewish community, and the Johnsons' friend Mathilde Krim. The Krims became very close to the Johnsons and even bought property in Texas near the LBJ Ranch. Other than the Erich Leinsdorf case, Johnson had not mentioned helping Jews to Middleton, Dr. Krim, or McPherson.

Dr. James Smallwood, the retired professor from Oklahoma State University, wrote articles that appeared on the Institute of Texan Cultures website as early as 2002 and in the *East Texas Historical Journal* in 2009 describing Operation Texas, and he deserves much of the credit, or discredit, for advancing the legend. As far as can be determined, he was the first to post the story on the web. Although Smallwood's account acknowledges Gomolak only in a few footnotes, he relies heavily on Gomolak's dissertation. In his journal article, Smallwood uses articles published by others who relied on Gomolak, referencing those sources as if they had verified Gomolak's account.

One author did go beyond the work done by Gomolak, although she, too, relied heavily on his dissertation. Reporter Claudia Feldman wrote an article for *Texas: The Houston Chronicle Sunday Magazine*. She interviewed David Novy and Elaine Shapiro, Novy's children. Feldman also spoke with Lyndon Johnson's daughter, Lynda Robb, and with me, then an archivist at the LBJ Library. David Novy, who was seventy-five years old at the time, told Feldman that his father and Johnson planned a series of secret rescues though he never knew exactly how many were saved. He told Feldman it was "More than a hundred. . . . More like several hundred. It was a big amount."<sup>106</sup> Gomolak had interviewed David Novy and based parts of his account of Operation Texas on these interviews. Feldman acknowledges the lack of evidence to support Operation Texas. The lack of evidence suggests David Novy may have exaggerated his knowledge of his father's and Johnson's actions. Lynda Robb told Feldman that her father took a strong stand against antisemitism, and he would have done everything in his power to stop the suffering, but she did not know how many people he helped rescue.

The numerous published articles, references in books, and Internet accounts describing Operation Texas give the appearance that multiple scholars have now verified the stories. In truth, however, the authors are citing each other, and none has proven the existence of an illegal operation. Gomolak's dissertation, the Smallwood articles, as well as the reference in Robert Dallek's book, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and his Times, 1908–1960*, are often cited by other authors as proof of Operation Texas.<sup>107</sup> A careful look at the footnotes in any of the published sources shows each can be traced back to Gomolak's dissertation.

The identities of the forty-two immigrants from Poland and Germany that Jim Novy spoke of in his speech at the synagogue dedication have proved elusive, as have the identities of those who tugged at Mrs. Johnson's sleeve following the dedication ceremony saying, "He helped me get out." Novy's relatives, including his daughter, do not know their identities.<sup>108</sup> Novy, a natural storyteller, may have stretched the facts to include people who were not on the list he made during his trip to Poland and Germany, people like Alfred Rosenthal, his mother, and sister. Perhaps Novy also included refugees who entered after the war. For example, Johnson's House of Representatives papers include correspondence with Novy about Hirsch Jakob, a Polish Jew living in Japan in 1947.<sup>109</sup> With Johnson's assistance, Jakob entered Texas in 1948 and settled in Austin.<sup>110</sup> After the war and into Johnson's Senate and White House years, Novy continued to ask for help in immigration cases.<sup>111</sup> So many years after the fact, it may be impossible to figure out exactly who Novy counted in the forty-two, but until scholars determine the circumstances of the immigration of these forty-two people, they should be cautious in drawing conclusions beyond what is evident in archival collections and firsthand testimony about Johnson's role.

If the truth does not match the Operation Texas legend, is LBJ's stature as a friend of the Jewish community diminished? No, it is not. Here is a more realistic picture of a man seriously interested in the plight of his constituents with relatives in Europe. It shows a congressman and his staff who worked to intercede with

the government bureaucracy in behalf of his constituents. Later in his career, Johnson's support of Israel was unflinching. Harry McPherson said, "In the Johnson era, I had the feeling that there was a greater ease of association between Jews and the White House and the President and his staff, than was normal or than was usual in an American government. This was a place that people felt comfortable with."<sup>112</sup> Without question Johnson was a true friend to the Jewish community in Austin as well as nationally and internationally.

Two interesting stories emerge from the research on Johnson and his efforts to help Jews. The first is the story of Johnson's view of Judaism, his concerns about Nazi Germany, and his efforts to facilitate Jewish immigration. The second story surrounds the growing belief in the legend of an illegal effort called "Operation Texas." The first story brings honor to Johnson, recognizes his activities and attitudes, and places them in perspective. The second suggests that historians use evidence with caution and verify secondary sources to make certain that they are not just perpetuating myths.<sup>113</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Charles Kaufman, ed., *Building for the Future: Congregation Agudas Achim, Austin, Texas, May 5-7, 1989*, 1, 2 Iyar 5749 (Austin, TX, 1989) 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Texas* [San Antonio] *Jewish Press*, January 17, 1941, January 31, 1941.

<sup>3</sup> Elaine and Morris Shapiro interview conducted by author, October 16, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Notes, Jim Novy, "Introduction of President Lyndon B Johnson," December 30, 1963, Jim Novy Papers (hereafter cited as Notes, Jim Novy), Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas (hereafter cited as LBJ Library); *President of the United of States Lyndon B. Johnson Dedicates Congregation Agudas Achim, Austin, Texas*, recorded December 30, 1963, Austin Custom Records, 1964, 33½ rpm.

<sup>5</sup> Notes, Jim Novy.

<sup>6</sup> Lady Bird Johnson, *A White House Diary* (New York, 1970), 28.

<sup>7</sup> Louis Stanislaus Gomolak, "Prologue: LBJ's Foreign-Affairs Background 1908-1948," (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1989), 48.

<sup>8</sup> Randall Woods, *LBJ: Architect of American Ambition* (New York, 2006), 139-140; Robert Dallek, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960* (New York, 1991), 169-170.

<sup>9</sup> Jenna Berger, "Review Essay: Teaching History, Teaching Tolerance—Holocaust Education in Houston," *Public Historian* 25 (Fall 2003): 129-130.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis Gould, "A Hunger for Power" (review of Robert Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Means of Ascent*) *Newsday*, March 4, 1990 (quotation). Gould made the same criticism in a review of Caro's *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: Master of the Senate* in the *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 2002. Gould was on the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin History Department when Gomolak submitted his dissertation there in 1989.

<sup>11</sup> James Smallwood, "Operation Texas: Lyndon B. Johnson's Attempt to Save Jews from the German Nazi Holocaust," Institute of Texan Cultures, accessed August 1, 2002, <http://www.texancultures.utsa.edu/hiddenhistory/Pages1/SmallwoodLBJ.htm>; James Smallwood, "Operation Texas: Lyndon B. Johnson, the Jewish Question and the Nazi Holocaust," *East Texas Historical Journal* 47 (Spring 2009): 3-17.

<sup>12</sup> For an example of a website urging Yad Vashem to confer the honor of "Righteous Gentile," see the Orthodox outreach AISH.COM website, accessed October 15, 2011, <http://www.aish.com/jw/s/48942551.html>.

<sup>13</sup> E-mail to Anne Wheeler, Communications Director at the LBJ Library and forwarded to the Supervisory Archivist, for response, September 7, 2011, Reference File, LBJ Library. The e-mail claims the maternal ancestors of Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) were Jewish. LBJ's mother, Rebekah Johnson, was an avid genealogist. Her papers at the LBJ Library include information on her ancestors, but nothing there indicates they were Jewish.

<sup>14</sup> "Operation Texas," accessed April 16, 2011, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Texas), Wikipedia; "Operation Texas: Topic View," accessed April 16, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=57919800836&topic=7845#!/topic.php?uid=57919800836&topic=7845>, Facebook; Lenny Ben-David, "Lyndon B. Johnson—A Righteous Gentile," accessed April 16, 2011, <http://lyndonjohnsonandisrael.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>15</sup> Notes, Jim Novy. On the recording of Novy's presentation at the synagogue dedication in 1963, there is no mention of the number 42. Instead Novy referred to the number as "many, many." He said: "[Johnson gave] me a letter to the embassy in Poland, and he went as far as call long distance to tell them to get as many people out of Poland and Germany that we possibly can. And, of course through the efforts of the President and with the recommendation of the embassy, we were able to take many, many people out." Recording, "President of the United of States Dedicates Congregation."

<sup>16</sup> Notes, Jim Novy.

<sup>17</sup> Gomolak, "Prologue," 48-51.

<sup>18</sup> Shapiro interview, October 16, 2002; Elaine and Morris Shapiro interview conducted by author, October 11, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Gomolak, "Prologue," 30-31.

<sup>20</sup> For information on Edel and Fanny Gontschar, see "Holocaust: Survivor List from the files of World Jewish Congress about Edel Körber Gontschar," Ancestry.com, accessed September 5, 2011, July 28, 2012, [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?MS\\_AdvCB=1&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=2&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=edel&gsfn\\_x=1&gsln=gontschar&gsln\\_x](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?MS_AdvCB=1&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=2&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=edel&gsfn_x=1&gsln=gontschar&gsln_x); "Holocaust: Survivor List from the files of World Jewish Congress about Fanny Gontschar," Ancestry.com, accessed September 5, 2011, July 28, 2012, [http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?MS\\_AdvCB=1&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=2&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=fanny&gsfn\\_x=1&gsln=gontschar&gsln\\_x](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?MS_AdvCB=1&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=2&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsfn=fanny&gsfn_x=1&gsln=gontschar&gsln_x).

<sup>21</sup> The author may be the journalist Gershon Swet who wrote for *Aufbau*.

<sup>22</sup> *Aufbau*, *Der Zeitgeist*, "Präsident Johnson intim: Jim Novy macht einen Besuch Im Weissen Haus," August 6, 1965, trans. Allen Fisher, Reference File, LBJ Library.

<sup>23</sup> Shapiro interviews, October 16, 2002, and October 11, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> *Texas Jewish Press*, October 25, 1940.

<sup>25</sup> Gomolak incorrectly asserted that no records related to the arrangement with the NYA could be found among the papers of the National Refugee Service (NRS). Gomolak, "Prologue," 50. However, a memorandum from October 20, 1940, does exist. See Texas for State Meeting in San Antonio on October 20, 1940, "Texas n.d. 1940" folder, Records of the NRS, box 3, American Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History, New York (hereafter cited as NRS Records).

<sup>26</sup> Table, "Resettlements in the State of Texas, January 1, 1937 - September 30, 1940," October 16, 1940, "Texas n.d. 1940" folder, box 3, NRS Records.

<sup>27</sup> Letter, J. B. Lightman to Ephraim Gomberg, April 30, 1940, "Texas n.d. 1940" folder, box 3, NFS Records.

<sup>28</sup> Dan Puckett, *In the Shadow of Hitler: Alabama's Jews and the Holocaust* (Tuscaloosa, forthcoming); Puckett, "In the Shadow of Hitler: Birmingham's Temple Emanu-El and the Shadow of Nazism," *Southern Jewish History* 11 (2008): 1-39.

<sup>29</sup> Raymond G. Carroll, "Alien Workers in America," *Saturday Evening Post*, January 25, 1936, 82.

<sup>30</sup> Memorandum to the Members of the Board of Review and Boards of Special Inquiry from James L. Houghteling, commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, November 17, 1938, Record Group 84, Records of the American consul, Juarez, Mexico, 811.11, box 29, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as NARA).

<sup>31</sup> General Records of the State Department, Group 59, and Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Record Group 84, at NARA in College Park, MD, include congressional correspondence about immigration cases. Documentation in these records is often sparse because State's Visa Division and U.S. consuls disposed of many immigration case files.

<sup>32</sup> Erich Leinsdorf, *Cadenza* (Boston, 1976), 76-79; Erich Leinsdorf interview conducted by Joe B. Frantz, March 18, 1969, LBJ Library.

<sup>33</sup> Congressional Quarterly Service, *Congressional Quarterly Almanac: 89th Congress, 1st Session – 1965*, 21 (Washington, DC, 1966), 459; Congressional Quarterly Service, *Congress and the Nation: 1945–1964* (Washington, DC., 1965), 218.

<sup>34</sup> David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941–1945* (New York, 1985), 6.

<sup>35</sup> David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941* (Amherst, MA, 1968), 43–44.

<sup>36</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 21, (1966) 461.

<sup>37</sup> Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 155–166.

<sup>38</sup> Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York, 2004), 53–54.

<sup>39</sup> Robert M. Levine, *Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish Experience in Cuba* (Gainesville, FL, 1993), 81–83, 91.

<sup>40</sup> Laura Margolis interview conducted by Linda Kuzmack, July 11, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<sup>41</sup> Leinsdorf, *Cadenza*, 76–79.

<sup>42</sup> Record Group 84, Havana Consulate, General Records, 1938, boxes 39 and 40, NARA.

<sup>43</sup> Leinsdorf interview, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Senator Morris Sheppard to Cordell Hull, February 16, 1938, Record Group 59, “811.111/Leinsdorf,” box 1319, NARA.

<sup>45</sup> For Charlotte Landauer and Henriette Loebel, see manifest for ship *Nieuw Amsterdam*, December 15, 1938: “New York Passenger Lists, 1820–1957 Record for Charlotte Landauer,” Ancestry.com, accessed September 21, 2010, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715\\_6260-0600&fn=Charlotte&ln=Landauer&st=r&ssrc=&pid=25193009](http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715_6260-0600&fn=Charlotte&ln=Landauer&st=r&ssrc=&pid=25193009); for Arthur and Lourdes Jokl, see manifest for ship *Villa de Madrid*, July 13, 1941: “New York Passenger Lists, 1820–1957 Record for Arthur Jokl,” Ancestry.com, accessed July 17, 2010, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715\\_6561-0033&fn=Arthur&ln=Jokl&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1006537388](http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715_6561-0033&fn=Arthur&ln=Jokl&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1006537388).

<sup>46</sup> Johnson, Lyndon Name Card, June 28, 1938, referencing correspondence about Lotte Landauer, Decimal File Name Index, Record Group 59, box 283, NARA.

<sup>47</sup> LBJ to Leon Savage, a New York attorney, December 12, 1944, “Leinsdorf, Erich,” LBJA, box 6, LBJ Library.

<sup>48</sup> Leinsdorf interview.

<sup>49</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 21 (1966): 459.

<sup>50</sup> Johnson, *White House Diary*, 322.

<sup>51</sup> Mina Parven, Novy’s niece, interview conducted by author, December 19, 2002. Gomolak indicates Gela Nowodworski and her three sons came to the United States following Novy’s trip to Europe in 1938, but, according to Parven’s interview, Nowodworski immigrated to Mexico much earlier. See Gomolak, “Prologue,” 30–31.

<sup>52</sup> Tape, “Novy Family Reunion,” July 24–26, 1998, Austin, Texas; Parven interview.

<sup>53</sup> Manifest for ship *Morazan*, June 22, 1938: "New Orleans, Passenger Lists, 1920-1945 Record for Geia [sic] Nowodowski," Ancestry.com, accessed April 22, 2010, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7484&iid=LAT905\\_167-0405&fn=Geia&ln=Nowodowski&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1040154](http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7484&iid=LAT905_167-0405&fn=Geia&ln=Nowodowski&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1040154); manifest for ship *Sixaola*, July 18, 1938: "New Orleans, Passenger Lists, 1920-1945 Record for Gela Nowodowski [sic]", Ancestry.com, accessed April 22, 2010, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7484&iid=LAT905\\_167-0591&fn=Gela&ln=Nowodowski&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1039462](http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7484&iid=LAT905_167-0591&fn=Gela&ln=Nowodowski&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1039462).

<sup>54</sup> Jim Novy to Lyndon Johnson, April 4, 1945, "Justice-Novy, Sam," House Papers, box 275, LBJ Library.

<sup>55</sup> Ted Gittinger interview conducted by author, May 20, 2011; Record Group 59, Visa Division, Individual Case File, 1933-1940. "811.111/Winter, Hermann," box 1713, NARA; Abram Vossen Goodman interview conducted by Ted Gittinger, April 22, 1996, LBJ Library. Goodman was the rabbi of Austin's Congregation Beth Israel from 1935 to 1941.

<sup>56</sup> For an explanation of Decree 937, see Levine, *Tropical Diaspora*, 105-118.

<sup>57</sup> State Department correspondence includes a series of letters about Hermann Winter: copy of letter made by embassy, LBJ to Josephus Daniels, American ambassador, Mexico City, April 20, 1939, Record Group 59, Visa Division, Individual Case File, 1933-1940. "811.111/Winter, Hermann," box 1713, NARA.

<sup>58</sup> George S. Messersmith, for the secretary of state, to Josephus Daniels, American ambassador, Mexico City, June 9, 1939, Record Group 59, Visa Division, Individual Case File, 1933-1940. "811.111/Winter, Hermann," box 1713, NARA.

<sup>59</sup> Goodman interview.

<sup>60</sup> Copy of letter made by embassy, Josephus Daniels, American ambassador, to LBJ, May 15, 1939, Record Group 59, Visa Division, Individual Case File, 1933-1940. "811.111/Winter, Hermann," box 1713, NARA.

<sup>61</sup> Abram V. Goodman Papers, LBJ Library.

<sup>62</sup> Goodman interview.

<sup>63</sup> Alfred Rosenthal interview conducted by author, October 29, 2010.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Manifest for ship *Argentina*, November 22, 1940: "New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 Record for Alfred Rosenthal," Ancestry.com, accessed August 21, 2011, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715\\_6513-0580-1&fn=Alfred&ln=Rosenthal&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1006501652](http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715_6513-0580-1&fn=Alfred&ln=Rosenthal&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1006501652).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Novy, Jim Name Card, July 30, 1941, referencing correspondence about Wilhelmine Rosenthal, Decimal File Name Index, 1940-44 Group 59, box 901, NARA.

<sup>68</sup> Gene Lasseter to LBJ, August 25, 1945, "Positions-Rosenthal, Alfred," House Papers, box 262, LBJ Library.

<sup>69</sup> Record of Oral Reference Request, April 6, 2000, "Jews and LBJ before and during World War II," Reference File, LBJ Library; Leon Schmidt remembered helping his father

select a thank-you gift for Congressman LBJ while on a shopping trip in New York City, and the father gave a copy of LBJ's thank-you note for the gift to the LBJ Library.

<sup>70</sup> Author to Betty Tilson, July 27, 2000, and attached documentation, "Jews and LBJ before and during World War II," Reference File, LBJ Library.

<sup>71</sup> For Andor, Lea, and Miklos Deutsch, see manifest for ship *Ile de France*, February 21, 1939: "New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 Record for Andor Deutsch," Ancestry.com, accessed August 21, 2011, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexoc?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715\\_6286-0721&fn=Andor&ln=Deutsch&st=r&ssrc=&pid=10041373](http://search.ancestry.com/iexoc?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7488&iid=NYT715_6286-0721&fn=Andor&ln=Deutsch&st=r&ssrc=&pid=10041373) 14.

<sup>72</sup> 75 Cong. Rec. 4668-4671 (1937.)

<sup>73</sup> Gomolak, "Prologue," 197; Smallwood (*article*), "Operation Texas," 3-4.

<sup>74</sup> 75 Cong. Rec. 4668-4671, 4719-4742 (1937); *New York Times*, May 19, 1937; 75 Cong. Rec., HR5897, 808 (1937). (History of Bills and Resolutions).

<sup>75</sup> Smallwood implies this bill passed in 1937, but by 1938 congressional attitudes had changed so Congress would no longer pass a bill allowing Jewish immigration. No change occurred, and the 1937 bill never made it to a final vote. See Smallwood (*article*), "Operation Texas," 3-4. See also Ben-David, "Lyndon B. Johnson." Based on my own research, it appears that most or all of the fifteen immigrants were able to eventually settle in the United States, although at least a few left the country and returned.

<sup>76</sup> Gomolak also contends that LBJ voted to "save aliens such as 'Nescinovich' and 'Friedman' from the Nazis, against massed southern and Republican opposition in May 1939 and October 1940." Gomolak, "Prologue," 197. The 1939 vote dealt with the deportation proceedings against Mario Nescinovich, but the bill related to Louis Friedman in 1940 was not a vote to save a life. That bill would have restored the citizenship of Louis Friedman who gave up his U.S. citizenship and became a naturalized citizen of Canada for business reasons. At the time of the roll-call vote, the bill had passed the Senate and House but been vetoed by President Roosevelt. The roll-call vote was on a simple procedural motion concerning the veto; LBJ voted against the motion. The motion failed due to lack of a quorum. Ultimately, the veto stood. See "Complete House Voting Record of Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson, by Subject from May 13, 1937 to December 31, 1948," 185, LBJ Library and 76 Cong. Rec. 13,522-13,534 (1940).

<sup>77</sup> 76 Cong. Rec. 5161-519 (1939); 76 Cong. Rec. Index H.R. 5643, 827 (History of Bills and Resolutions).

<sup>78</sup> 80 Cong. Rec. 7888 (1948). Congressional procedures allow various types of "paired" votes, none of which is tabulated in the vote tally: Live Pair, where a present member announces he is paired with an absent member taking the opposite position; Specific Pair, where two absent members are recorded as "paired" for and against the bill; and General Pair, where members planning to be absent are recorded as paired, but without taking a position on the bill. In this case, Johnson asked to be recorded as "paired," but did not announce a position, and was recorded as a General Pair.

<sup>79</sup> Oral History Staff, "1948 Chronology," 18-20, LBJ Library.



<sup>80</sup> "Statement by the President Upon Signing the Displaced Persons Act, June 25, 1948," in *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, 1948* (Washington, DC, 1949) 382.

<sup>81</sup> LBJ to Catherine Richardson, June 4, 1951, "Displaced Persons," box 228, House Papers, LBJ Library; LBJ says in the letter, "I supported the original DP bill when it passed the Senate."

<sup>82</sup> Mary Rather to Mrs. Sam Johnson, April 6, 1950, "Johnson, Mrs. Sam E. (Rebekah), (March 1950–August 1958)," Family Correspondence, box 1, LBJ Library.

<sup>83</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac: 82nd Congress, 2nd session – 1953*, 8 (Washington, DC, 1953), 154–156

<sup>84</sup> 82 Cong. Rec. 5630–5631 (1952).

<sup>85</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 8, (1953) 158–160.

<sup>86</sup> Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (New York, 1966), 48. None of LBJ's public statements from 1952 in the Statements File, box 11, LBJ Library, mentioned the McCarran-Walter Act.

<sup>87</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 8 (1953): 159.

<sup>88</sup> LBJ to Kenneth W. Fuller, August 12, 1953, "Immigration-Watkins Bill-S. 1917," Senate Papers, box 251, LBJ Library.

<sup>89</sup> Dudley Dougherty Radio Speech originating from WBAP-TV and Radio in Fort Worth, July 2, 1954, Dougherty File from General File, 1954, "54 Campaign, Dougherty" [1 of 2], Senate Political Files, box 33, LBJ Library.

<sup>90</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Almanac: 85th Congress, 1st session – 1957*, 13 (Washington, DC, 1957), 670–671.

<sup>91</sup> LBJ to Mrs. Franklin D. [Eleanor] Roosevelt, September 6, 1957, "Roosevelt, Mrs. Franklin D.," White House Famous Names, box 9, LBJ Library

<sup>92</sup> "Christadelphia Statement of Faith," Christadelphia World Wide, accessed April 2, 2011, <http://www.christadelphia.org/basf.htm>.

<sup>93</sup> Jessie Hatcher interview conducted by Paul Bolton, March 28, 1968, LBJ Library.

<sup>94</sup> Wright Patman interview conducted by Joe B. Frantz, August 11, 1972, LBJ Library; Carl Phinney interview conducted by Joe B. Frantz, October 11, 1968, LBJ Library.

<sup>95</sup> Although undated, the letter is on stationery from the Hotel Winston and shows P. M. Egerton as manager. *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory*, 1933, indicates Egerton managed the Hotel Winston c. 1932. See *Boyd's District of Columbia Directory*, 1933 (Washington, DC, 1933), 532.

<sup>96</sup> LBJ to Mother, undated, Family Correspondence, "Johnson, Mrs. Sam E. (Rebekah) (Correspondence Selected from her Papers)," box 1, LBJ Library.

<sup>97</sup> Lady Bird Johnson interview IV conducted by Michael Gillette, February 4, 1978, 16, LBJ Library.

<sup>98</sup> Museum Collection, LBJ Library. Van Paassen was a Dutch American journalist, a Unitarian minister, and a renowned Zionist. Wise, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise's son, later covered the Spanish Civil War for the *New York Times* and wrote *Swastika: The Nazi Terror*,

among other books. Pierre Van Paassen and James Waterman Wise, *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization* (New York, 1934).

<sup>99</sup> Mathilde Krim interview conducted by author, May 19, 2010. Krim actually stated that the man, whose name she did not remember, invented the Stetson hat. However, Johnson wore Resistol western hats created by Harry Rolnick. According to Jody Cox of the Associated Press (*Houston Chronicle*, September 20, 1987), Rolnick grew up in a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, and moved to Dallas in the early 1900s.

<sup>100</sup> Tom Segev, *1967: Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East* (New York, 2007), trans. Jessica Cohen, 119.

<sup>101</sup> Harry McPherson interview conducted by author, August 9, 2010.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Texas Jewish Press*, May 2, 1941; Rabbi Henry Cohen II, *Kindler of Souls: Rabbi Henry Cohen of Texas* (Austin, TX, 2007), 113. The Henry Cohen Papers contain multiple sets of mimeographed directions, dated October 29, 1941, for obtaining visas to Cuba, as well as "Confidential Migration Information" from the NRS, November 12, 1941, advising that Cuba was again issuing visas, but immigrants were not being permitted to leave Germany. "Immigration Information, 1900-1941," box 3M310, Dolph Briscoe Center, University of Texas, Austin.

<sup>104</sup> Bonnie Gurewitsch of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City informed the author that even the isolationist senator from North Dakota, Gerald Nye, frequently asked for help for a constituent named Herman Stern who was trying to bring Jews to the U.S. Bonnie Gurewitsch interview conducted by author, March 14, 2012.

<sup>105</sup> Lady Bird Johnson interview IX conducted by Michael Gillette, January 24, 1979, 17-18, LBJ Library.

<sup>106</sup> Claudia Feldman, "LBJ's Rescue Mission," *Texas: Houston Chronicle Magazine*, September 27, 1998, 7-14.

<sup>107</sup> "Operation Texas," wikipedia.org.

<sup>108</sup> In addition to Elaine Shapiro, Novy's daughter, I talked to Mina Parven, Novy's niece, and Milton Simons, a Novy friend and husband of another Novy niece.

<sup>109</sup> Correspondence, "State-Jakob, Hirsch," Johnson House Papers, box 307, LBJ Library.

<sup>110</sup> Shapiro interview, October 11, 2010. Jakob entered at San Francisco, California. See manifest of ship *Marine Swallow*, January 30, 1948: "California Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1957, Record for Hirsch Jakob," Ancestry.com, accessed September 12, 2010, [http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7949&iid=CAM1410\\_395-0638&fn=Hirsch&ln=Jakob&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1019920](http://search.ancestry.com/iexec?htx=View&r=an&dbid=7949&iid=CAM1410_395-0638&fn=Hirsch&ln=Jakob&st=r&ssrc=&pid=1019920).

<sup>111</sup> See LBJ's House Papers, box 288 and 307; Johnson Senate Master File, Index, "Nos-Nz 200", box 138; Johnson Vice Presidential Papers, "Nos-Nz 200, 1963," box 37; White House Central Files Name File, "Novy, Jim," box 156, LBJ Library.

<sup>112</sup> McPherson interview.

<sup>113</sup> Two recent works that puncture myths concerning the early Jews in communities are Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontier of Texas* (Austin, TX, 2010) and Leonard Rogoff, *Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 2010).