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Removal Approval: The Industrial Removal Office Experience in Fort Worth, Texas¹

by

Hollace Ava Weiner

The \$22 train tickets, doled out by New York's Industrial Removal Office (IRO) to transport Sam Zalefsky's penniless family to Texas in 1911, turned into a wise long-term investment. Zalefsky, a Russian immigrant eking out a living as a wallpaper hanger, gave little return on the money. But his ten-year-old son, who shortened his surname to Zale, channeled his immigrant drive and family ties into an enterprise that became the Zale Corporation, at one time the world's largest retail jeweler.²

Neither accident, nor luck, nor established placement criteria landed the Zalefskys in Texas. Yet they were among the seventy-nine thousand immigrants plucked by the IRO from New York's teeming streets and given a fresh start west of the Hudson River.³ Despite the agency's goal of selecting "friendless refugees" and matching their job skills with out-of-town job opportunities, the Zalefskys fit another category.⁴ Their move exemplified chain migration, whereby one person who relocates to a foreign city becomes a magnet drawing a procession of family and *landsleit* to the new locale.

The Zalefskys were far from unique. Many an IRO migrant dispatched to this Texas county seat nicknamed Cowtown did not precisely fit the agency's client profile. Of seventy-two IRO families who came to Fort Worth between 1903 and 1915, forty-one already had relatives or friends in the west Texas city, sponsors who vouched for their industry and reliability. Had the IRO not subsidized the journey, these individuals might have gotten there

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anyway. Their Fort Worth friends and relatives apparently understood the system. Much like modern-day applicants for government aid, they used the social service agency to full advantage. Parlaying their foothold in the hometown economy into influence in the Jewish community, they convinced the local IRO agent to send for their kith and kin.⁵

The IRO touted itself as the stimulus for migration, not a link in a process already under way.⁶ David Bressler, the agency's general manager, often spoke about engineering an "artificial distribution" of Jewish émigrés who otherwise would remain in the "so-called New York ghetto."⁷ Part of the agency's mission, Bressler wrote, was "to popularize . . . and to illumine the dark interior for the Jewish immigrant."⁸ Indeed, a handful of the immigrants "artificially" transplanted to Fort Worth later sponsored the arrival of friends and relatives. By and large, however, those émigrés with pre-existing ties stayed longer, fared better, and recruited more relatives and friends than those lacking such connections. Yet within both groups there are heartwarming success stories and descendants still around to reminisce and recite kaddish in their memories.

This case study examines the origins and goals of the IRO, the implementation of its program in a city two-thousand miles from agency headquarters, and the pivotal role played by its Fort Worth agent. The article also illustrates the formative impact the influx of IRO immigrants had on Fort Worth's Jewish institutions. The lens for viewing the IRO is the cordial, eleven-year correspondence that developed between two contemporaries: German-born New York attorney David Bressler (1879–1942), the manager of the agency's headquarters, and Uriah Myer "U. M." Simon (1879–1954), an American-born Fort Worth attorney who labored to reunite families and bring worthy merchants and *menschen* to his hometown. The primary source materials are the brittle handwritten and typewritten letters, questionnaires, forms, and telegrams in the archives of the American Jewish Historical Society in New York. The impetus for this research was the chance discovery of copies of the Simon-Bressler correspondence in a storeroom at Fort Worth's Beth-El Congregation. Research into the

*Uriah Myer Simon, 1903, in his graduation photo from the
University of Denver Law School, 1903.
(Courtesy Beth-El Congregation Archives, Fort Worth.)*

names mentioned in that correspondence, coupled with visits to the American Jewish Historical Society, resulted in this essay. The materials provide colorful insights into both the IRO and the dynamics of Fort Worth, a city that in 1906 had forty thousand residents and, “roughly speaking . . . anywhere between five and eight hundred” Jews. The Jewish head count was, frankly, a guess. As Simon wrote Bressler, “No [Jewish] census has ever been taken and no one here has made any serious attempt to estimate our population.”⁹ At least not until the IRO inquired.

Origins of the IRO

The IRO, which operated from 1901 to 1922, was a Progressive Era agency with a jarring impersonal name. It had its “intellectual roots” in the Baron de Hirsch experiments of the

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1890s when Russian Jews were resettled in the Argentine pampas.¹⁰ Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831–1896), a Munich financier and philanthropist, established a \$2.4 million fund to transplant eastern European Jews to the North American interior and to turn them into farmers and craftsmen. The fund's North American trustees, including New York banker Jacob Schiff, sought to redirect immigrants away from overcrowded seaports and urban slums that nurtured crime, disease, and radical politics. They hoped to improve their immigrant cousins' quality of life while curbing a source of antisemitism. The farm experiments had limited success. The fund's trustees, employing the jargon of the day, also tried "removing" selected immigrants to "industrial" areas beyond the big cities. Thus the agency's technical name.¹¹

The philosophy behind these removal experiments was in tune with prevailing tenets of American social work that extolled the wholesomeness of rural America as well as the kindness of "fellow Christians" or co-religionists. In every big city, settlement houses and orphanages were overcrowded and overwhelmed. A change in environment seemed advisable. A prime example of this rural philosophy in action was the Orphan Train movement, which between 1854 and 1929 transported 150,000 unwanted, often unruly children from the streets of New York to places west. Like the Lower East Side's penniless Russian Jews, many of these abandoned children were foreign-born souls whose families had found American life harder than expected. The Orphan Train was the brainchild of Charles Loring Brace, a minister and former journalist who infused the endeavor with a religious and righteous component. His program was well organized with fastidious paperwork and permission forms signed and filed on each waif. Aiming to be both systematic and compassionate, agency employees lined up orphans at train depots where foster parents took their picks.¹²

The Industrial Removal Office also had an efficient filing and numbering system. It backed up its casework with reams of forms and correspondence. It aimed to be systematic yet compassionate when determining each client's destination. Bressler and others who touted the IRO's goals felt a nobility of purpose. Like many

social reformers of the day, they emphasized the constructive benefits derived from the “proper environment.” They were convinced that removing Russian, Polish, and Romanian Jews from New York City would enable these émigrés to develop their “inherent virtues” and become “a welcome addition to the Jewish communities of our land” and “an important factor” in the industrial development of the country.¹³ The dark side of this progressivism was the leadership’s concern that squalid concentrations of inner-city immigrants were fanning antisemitism and anti-immigration legislation.¹⁴

The necessity of coaxing immigrants out of New York became most pressing to Jewish communal leaders in 1900 when hordes of Romanian Jews fleeing increasing oppression disembarked at Ellis Island. That June, the first National Conference of Jewish Charities convened in New York. At the gathering, social workers and philanthropists running New York’s United Jewish Charities implored communities nationwide to help shoulder the burden. These eastern European refugees, they reasoned, had not intended to immigrate to New York per se, but to America, and it was “incumbent on Jews all over the country” to absorb the overflow.¹⁵

Within a month of the conference, the Roumanian [*sic*] Relief Committee was created. B’nai B’rith, the Jewish men’s social service organization founded in 1843, had fraternal lodges across the nation and agreed to implement the placement effort. To motivate lodge members beyond the Northeast, New York’s Jewish establishment worked with Leo N. Levi, a Texan and the newly elected president of the International Order of B’nai B’rith. Levi’s executive committee issued bulletins to lodges throughout the South, the Midwest, and the Far West requesting that they activate resettlement arms. Many responded. By the time the Romanian flow ebbed late in 1900, pogroms in Russia had spurred more mass immigration. The refugee dilemma seemed endless. Wary American politicians, cognizant of rising crime rates and nativist sentiments, threatened to close the nation’s gates. Trustees of the Baron de Hirsch Fund believed that large-scale “removal” to less populous,

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lower profile locales could indeed relieve the problem. In February 1901 they helped establish the Industrial Removal Office to institutionalize and systemize the resettlement work under way.

Texas, Fort Worth, and Institution Building

The call to help fellow Jews had special urgency among Texans because B'nai B'rith President Leo N. Levi, the IRO's first vice president, was one of their own. Born in the south Texas city of Victoria, Levi had been the longtime president of Temple B'nai Israel in Galveston, the state's Jewish capital. In 1888 Levi hired Galveston's rabbi, Henry Cohen, who became the state's best known, best loved, and ultimately its longest-serving spiritual leader. Personable and insightful, Levi later framed the international Kishinev petition protesting the 1903 Easter massacre of Russian Jews. Levi's plea to B'nai B'rith brethren to open their arms and their hearts to Ellis Island's immigrants moved an east Texas rabbi, Maurice Faber of Tyler, to write the IRO headquarters in May 1901:

In conversation with that peer of man, Mr. Leo N. Levi, I learned of the noble undertaking and gigantic work you have on hand, and I hardly need tell you that my heart and soul is with you, ready to help you in a small way, all I can. I promised . . . to make short trips in my vicinity and endeavor to place some of the men as soon after *Sh'buoth* as possible. We can use here a shoemaker; one who can repair neatly could make a good living. . . . I can also place two young men, one as a porter in a wholesale liquor store, and one as a driver on [a] beer wagon, wages \$5.00 per week.¹⁶

Leo Levi's leadership, stature, "zeal, patience and judgment"¹⁷ were an inspiration. When this national figure suffered a heart attack on January 13, 1904, and died at age 46,¹⁸ the same Texas rabbi wrote the IRO a note of mourning:

The irreparable loss the entire Jewry sustained in the untimely demise of Bro. Leo N. Levi will, I hope, not stop the wheels of the Removal Machinery; and the work, so nobly begun, will continue for the blessing of our poor brethren. The universal

expression of sorrow in all our communities throughout the land shows that the people understood and appreciated his work. May his spirit animate and urge us to continue and labor for the cause of humanity.¹⁹

Members of Fort Worth's B'nai B'rith lodge also expressed shock and sorrow over Levi's death and promised to redouble their efforts resettling the eastern European Jews.

Fort Worth Jewry had been slow to participate in the IRO. When the immigration agency was created in February 1901, Fort Worth had a small Orthodox synagogue but no Jewish fraternal lodge. During the summer of 1901, a local B'nai B'rith group was finally begun, spurred by a visit of regional representatives from Waco, ninety miles distant, and neighboring Dallas, forty miles away. The Fort Worth affiliate became Lodge No. 519, compared with Dallas's much older Lodge 197 founded in 1873.²⁰

The Fort Worth lodge had forty charter members, merchants and professionals who in some measure reflected the city's Jewish demographic mix. A number of the "brothers" were eastern European immigrants, founders, and officers at the Orthodox congregation Ahavath Sholom. Other lodge members originally hailed from Tennessee, Indiana, Louisiana, and Germany. They were unaffiliated with any congregation. B'nai B'rith, as it had done in many cities across the Far West, integrated Jewish men without concern for national origin or denominational differences. It coalesced the city's leading Jewish merchants and *machers* into an identifiable religious organization, providing a "meeting ground" for social and charitable activities.²¹ The lodge's elected leaders included Henry Gernsbacher, a New Orleans-born kitchen supply merchant, and Louis F. Shanblum, once a Warsaw law student and now a Texas scrap iron dealer. The common denominators among these men appear to have been Judaism and success in business.

Three months after the B'nai B'rith lodge got its start, Jeanette Miriam Goldberg, an organizer with the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was traveling through Texas. Her visit to Fort Worth led to an October meeting at the Delaware Hotel and formation of a local NCJW chapter with twenty-six charter

members.²² Unlike B'nai B'rith, with its mix of men from eastern European and American backgrounds, the local NCJW drew no one from the Orthodox community. Nationally, the NCJW appealed to educated American women, to the so-called "German-Jewish elite" with ties to Reform rather than traditional synagogues. NCJW, begun in 1893 in Chicago, exhorted women to take an assertive role in synagogue and community, a notion at odds with traditional Jewish practice.²³

The creation in Fort Worth of both an NCJW section and a B'nai B'rith affiliate stirred a yearning among the more acculturated Jews for organized religious worship. As the High Holy Days neared in the fall of 1902, B'nai B'rith president Henry Gernsbacher called a meeting of Jewish men who desired to hold "independent" religious "services on the Reform plan." Three weeks later they reconvened, and forty-three men voted to charter Beth-El, a Reform congregation.²⁴ The NCJW chapter automatically functioned as the Beth-El auxiliary. The women taught religious school, recruited a rabbi, paid the temple choir, hosted potluck suppers during the city's annual Fat Stock Show, staged musicales, started an adult Hebrew class, launched a building fund, hosted a Hanukkah ball, and donated seventy dollars to out-of-town charities. The Council of Jewish Women had a full agenda.²⁵ In contrast, the B'nai B'rith lodge's first twenty-two months were largely social, with bimonthly meetings held Sunday mornings at the Knights of Pythias Hall.

This leisurely pace was to change. Following news of the Kishinev massacre, Fort Worth Jews on May 3, 1903, convened a "mass meeting" at Ahavath Sholom to protest the Russian pogroms. Those assembled collected two hundred dollars to launch the local lodge's involvement with the IRO.²⁶ One month later, Fort Worth's Jewish community welcomed its first IRO immigrants, a family of six: Alex and Gittel Foreman and their four sickly children. The family had fled Russia eight months before.²⁷ According to lodge minutes, "A B'nai B'rith committee was appointed to meet and greet them upon their arrival to our city. The committee also provided financial aid" to supplement the \$4.85 in "maintenance" money provided by the IRO.²⁸ The lodge found a

job for Alex Foreman, an unskilled émigré classified by the IRO as a “general worker.”

This immigrant family was also needy medically and emotionally. Ten days after the Foreman family’s arrival, thirty women from Ahavath Sholom formed a Ladies Hebrew Relief Society to administer bedside care and provide food, clothing, “friendship and sociability.” More immigrants arrived. Over the next twelve years, the Ladies Hebrew Relief Society grew to include 130 volunteers. Most, if not all, of the women were conversant in Yiddish and affiliated with the shul. They paid “membership monthly dues of 25 cents.” With that money plus “the proceeds of a ball or picnic,” the women channeled their charity toward the immigrants’ most basic needs. Recalled the group’s cofounder, Sarah Levy Shanblum:

Several sick women and children were restored to health and many hundreds of dollars paid out for hospital fees and doctors. . . . [We] assisted in sending consumptive people to Denver [location of B’nai B’rith’s National Jewish Hospital for Consumptives] and other places, so that they might be cured, or at least prolong their life. During the cold winter months, or when the heads of the families are out of work or sick, the families are provided with coal. . . . In all the work done, most of it is such that the men could not attend to.²⁹

Fort Worth women active in NCJW did not immediately get involved with immigrant resettlement work, possibly because they did not speak Yiddish, possibly because the Orthodox women were filling that need. Officially, they denied that such a need existed. One of the NCJW’s early annual reports asserts, “We are not ripe for settlement work in our community. . . . No present necessity exists for this species of work.”³⁰ Elsewhere across the country and on Ellis Island, NCJW was providing immigrant assistance. It would take Fort Worth’s NCJW several years to decide upon its communal niche in the resettlement process.

Welcome to Cowtown

Just as the IRO resettlement work was getting under way, twenty-five-year-old U. M. Simon moved to Fort Worth fresh out

of the University of Denver law school. He joined B'nai B'rith and in 1904 was appointed IRO liaison. Among his early duties was to fill out a questionnaire describing his adopted city. The survey inquired about wages ("Factory hands: \$1.50 to \$4.00 per day"); about rents ("\$15.00 per month and up"), and about schools ("nine white schools, one high school").³¹ It asked about transportation facilities ("a network of ten railroad lines") and about industries. The questionnaire gave Simon a reason to research the city's past history and to speculate upon its future.

Founded in 1849, the city had begun as a military fort, one of eight outposts between the Rio Grande and the Red River that protected Texas settlers from Comanche raids. Fort Worth prided itself on its frontier origins and its location on one of the Southwest's oldest cattle trails. The region's cattle-driving past made the city a logical place for the development of stockyards, packinghouses, and kindred industries that fueled the growth of a network of railroads.³² The city was also a mecca for ranchers and cowboys seeking supplies and bank loans as well as recreation in the city's infamous red-light district, Hell's Half Acre. As Nat Washer, a Jewish merchant who moved to the city in 1882, reminisced:

The cowboys from the various ranches made semiannual pilgrimages to Fort Worth and after outfitting themselves with new togs they would use the balance of their six months' income to "light up" and take in the city sights, and after a hilarious . . . vacation, would go back to save up for another anticipated season of "dress and delight."³³

Fort Worth may have been a magnet for ranchers and farmers, but not so for Jews. Historically, Jews have tended to be urban dwellers. Most Jews who moved to this arid region along the Trinity River gravitated to Dallas, which had begun as a commercial center rather than a military post. Dallas was more cosmopolitan, more populated, and more suitable for families than Fort Worth. By 1876, Dallas had a synagogue with an ordained rabbi who led Sabbath services and operated a nonsectarian school for the general community.³⁴

Fort Worth's early Jewish settlers tended to be single males who were adventurers and risk takers. They were generally loners who sought out the marginality of the frontier. The city's first Jew, German-born Simon Gabert, arrived in 1856, then left during the Rocky Mountain gold rush, returning several years later when his mining claims failed to pan out. He became a cotton buyer.³⁵ The city's second Jew, Warsaw-born Jacob Samuels, enlisted in the Confederate cavalry when a unit was mustered on Main Street. After Reconstruction, he opened one of the first stores on the courthouse square and enjoyed camaraderie with the city's elite.³⁶ Isadore Carb, a New Orleans teen whose family farm was ravaged by the Union Army, ventured to Texas in 1871 in search of "vast ranges and ranches." His first stop was Dallas, which, he wrote home, was a disappointment: "There's no cowboys here and everybody rides slow like at home and don't make no noise." Selling his possessions to buy a horse and buckboard, he proceeded west to Fort Worth and wrote his mother:

I'm gonna stay right here. I sure like Fort Worth. It's got cowboys and everything. It's just like the books and people said. . . . There's buffaloes and bears and Indians and cowboys out there. . . . Mamma. You oughter see the cowboys loping up Main Street!³⁷

French-born Isaac Dahlman, another of Fort Worth's early Jewish entrepreneurs, was more interested in cattle than cowboys. In 1889, he tried to ship ice-packed beef to England. The cargo spoiled.³⁸ Another early Jewish settler was Russian-born Sam Rosen who, to foil a competitor, stealthily constructed a trolley track during a midnight snowstorm.³⁹ His transportation line flourished.

These were the sorts of Jewish settlers who gravitated to Fort Worth. Judaism to them was secondary or tertiary. One Jewish clothing merchant, a mellow baritone, boasted of singing in the choir at the Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Catholic churches.⁴⁰ Flora Weltman Schiff, daughter of a pioneer Jewish saloonkeeper, wrote that the mere mention of a minyan was met with ridicule. "Fort Worth Jews were beyond redemption," she recalled.⁴¹ As Sander Gilman observes in *Jewries at the Frontier*,

many a Jew elects to settle in a place like Fort Worth because it is perceived as a peripheral space where one may function alone, free of communal expectations.⁴²

Fort Worth Jews did have their own cemetery, Emanuel Hebrew Rest. It was located on an acre of land donated to the "Israelites" of the city in 1879 by civic figure John Peter Smith who that same year set aside land for Protestant, Catholic, and African American cemeteries.⁴³ The Hebrew cemetery's origins indicate that Jews were an integral part of the landscape, yet were passive when it came to creating their own religious institutions.

The demographics of the Fort Worth Jewish community were to change. Half a world away, the assassination of the Russian czar, Alexander II, on March 13, 1881, unleashed violence against Jews. Pogroms erupted across Russia. Decrees, enacted in May 1882, authorized eviction of Jews from non-Jewish villages and, later, from Moscow and the Russian interior. Mass migrations to America began, averaging more than one hundred thousand refugees a year. A number of refugees trickled into Fort Worth. Previously, those eastern-European immigrant Jews (such as Samuels and Rosen) who had come to Fort Worth were full of wanderlust, independence, and devil-may-care enterprise. This new wave brought traumatized travelers, immigrants accustomed to communities where Judaic practices were part of the fabric of everyday life. They arrived speaking Yiddish. Among the first to reach Fort Worth were Rachel and Joseph Jacobs. After their nephew, thirty-year-old Moses Shanblum, made it to Ellis Island in 1887, he joined them in Texas.⁴⁴

"When I came to Fort Worth in the year 1887, I found only six Jewish families who worshipped in a private house on the Holidays," Shanblum later recalled. A successful peddler, Shanblum soon opened a small store in town and organized a minyan that met in homes and in the backs of stores. Wearing his trademark black coat and black derby, a decidedly alien form of dress in west Texas, he went door-to-door, shop to shop, and peddler to peddler, persuading fellow Jews "that a synagogue was more important than a new buggy or suit." It was time to coalesce into a congregation. On October 9, 1892, Moses Shanblum, his uncle Joe,

and his brother Louis were among thirty-one men who gathered in another immigrant's living room to found Congregation Ahavath Sholom, commonly called "the shul." Within ten months, the charter members put five hundred dollars down on a thousand dollar lot. When the lot was paid in full, they used the land as collateral to borrow five-hundred dollars to build Fort Worth's first Jewish house of worship, completed in the fall of 1895.⁴⁵ The Reform congregation, which was organized in 1902 and referred to as "the temple," did not erect a building until 1908. Although the Orthodox immigrants were relative latecomers to the Fort Worth Jewish community, they organized their congregation a decade before the Reform Jews, many of whom were local pioneers.

This sequence of institutional development—an Orthodox shul followed by the creation of a Reform temple—is highly unusual. A more typical pattern, evidenced in Dallas and Galveston, was for the long-established Jews of German descent to charter a congregation pre-dating the eastern European migration wave. In many communities, such as Tyler and Houston, arrival of the refugees led to strife as both groups tried to worship within the same space.⁴⁶ In Houston, congregation minutes refer to a "cleavage" dividing the membership and to the theft of English-language prayer books.⁴⁷ In Tyler one faction voted to expel members who intermarried. The eastern Europeans resisted mixed seating of men and women, insisted that men wear prayer shawls and skull caps, and opposed the trend toward English translations of the liturgy. Eventually, as demographic historian Lee Shai Weissbach has documented, the eastern European Jews seceded from the pioneer congregations, "creating their own set of communal institutions and their own social milieu."⁴⁸

Fort Worth experienced no such internal conflict or turmoil over religious ritual. The Orthodox Jews found no existing institutions to encroach upon. Orthodox and Reform Jews did not argue over how to pray. On Sabbath, they went their separate ways. Their interactions related more to commerce.

Certainly, each group harbored negative stereotypes about the other. The Orthodox mocked the Reform (and especially the

unaffiliated) Jews as goyim. Reform Jews viewed the immigrants as greenhorns, crude newcomers to put it mildly. "If you married outside your little group, it was almost like an interracial marriage," recalled a Gernsbacher descendant who had a number of cousins from "mixed marriages" between Orthodox and Reform.⁴⁹ As in a host of American cities cited by Weissbach, "a sort of uneasiness . . . defined the relationship between the two groups."⁵⁰ In Fort Worth, the divisions were less antagonistic than elsewhere because these two subcommunities had not clashed under the same roof nor attempted to change one another's liturgy or rituals. In future decades, it became comfortable for families to affiliate with both the temple and the shul. The fact that Jewish merchants and professionals worked well together in the business setting boded well for the immigrant resettlement movement.

The Local Agent

Young U. M. Simon was a good fit for the role of B'nai B'rith's IRO liaison. An American-born Reform Jew, he was the son of Orthodox immigrants of eastern European stock. He understood both sides of the immigrant equation. He felt empathy toward the newcomers yet discerned the discomfort they generated among his American-born neighbors. He saw the big picture in part because persecution had also driven his family from Europe. Simon's parents, Uriah and Hannah Goldsmith Simon, along with their daughter Sarah and several dozen relatives, had emigrated from Yanova, Lithuania, in 1873.⁵¹ They settled outside Boston in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Simon's father became a peddler whose route took him and his family into the Deep South. By 1878, he was operating a grocery store in Bolivar County, Mississippi, across the river from Arkansas.

His son Uriah Myer, the fourth of six siblings, was born in 1879 in Moore's Landing, a Mississippi River town washed out of existence during an 1882 storm.⁵² Forced to relocate, the Simons moved to Tyler, an east Texas county seat that had once served as a supply depot for the Confederacy. There the family made a living in the ice business. In 1887 the Simons were among fifty-three Jewish families to charter Tyler's

first Jewish congregation, Beth El, a synagogue that rapidly moved from traditional to Reform.⁵³ Five years after the synagogue's founding, the elder Simon died at the age of 49, leaving his wife, four daughters, and two sons to support one another.⁵⁴ The father's death reinforced in the children the strength of family ties.

U. M. graduated from high school in 1896 and enrolled at the University of Texas in Austin. Troubled with asthma, he moved to Colorado to study law at the University of Denver, finding relief in the Rocky Mountain region's dry climate. Denver was a one-day train ride from Fort Worth where U. M. frequently journeyed to visit his married sister, Sarah Simon Brown, her three daughters, and his older brother Ben, who lived in his sister's household.⁵⁵ When U. M. graduated first in his law school class in 1903, he moved to Fort Worth. The reasons behind the move were compelling: the climate was dry; the economy was booming with the recent opening of the Swift and Armour meat-packing plants; and he longed to be among family.⁵⁶

Simon integrated quickly into his new hometown. His German-born brother-in-law, David Brown, an ice manufacturer, was a charter member and officer at Beth-El Congregation. Hattie Weltman, the tall, willowy, musically talented girl Simon began courting and later married, was the daughter of another temple founder. In short, Simon entered the inner circle of the community's Reform Jewish leadership. He also adapted with ease professionally. Soon after his arrival, Simon was hired, part-time, as assistant county attorney. In that position, his name became familiar to the city's 160 practicing attorneys, three of whom were Jewish.⁵⁷ Recognized as a young man of formidable intellect, Simon conveyed a cordial if patrician air. Despite his short stature—he was no more than five-feet tall—he projected a powerful, take-charge presence. "You never thought about his size," recalled his daughter-in-law.⁵⁸ A childhood ailment had left U. M. unable to turn his head or to drive a carriage or a car. (Nonetheless, he owned a succession of large black automobiles that his wife drove.) Given U. M. Simon's bearing, his background, and his eagerness to make a name for himself in new surroundings, it is

understandable why he stepped into the position of the B'nai B'rith lodge's IRO liaison.

Simon approached his IRO volunteer role as if it were a cabinet post or a salaried job. Initially, he surveyed the paperwork relating to IRO clients previously sent to Fort Worth. He surmised that up until then the lodge had welcomed any immigrant the New York agency opted to send. Among the arrivals had been two shoemakers⁵⁹ and two tailors, one of them a "weaver" and the other a "knitter of sweaters."⁶⁰ A number of the immigrants had difficulty adjusting and did not remain long. The lot of the tailor seemed especially hard. As one immigrant poet in Fort Worth observed: "He mends old coats with tireless thread/For coins to buy salt fish and bread."⁶¹ Most of the immigrants were, in agency parlance, "direct removals," meaning they had no prior ties to Texas. Many of the men turned out to be, in Simon's words, "somewhat of a disappointment."

Among the failures was Hyman Altes, a tailor who had arrived during the summer of 1904 as Simon came on board. "He demanded much more than he was entitled to" and showed "little inclination to help himself," even when the lodge bought him a tailor shop.⁶² Another tailor, Jake Weinstein, who was dispatched to Fort Worth with his wife, left for Oklahoma City after two months. When the IRO inquired about Weinstein, Simon replied that the tailor had fared no better in Oklahoma and was "probably working his way back to New York. So be on the lookout for him." A third IRO tailor, Feive Back, had a "good position while here," Simon wrote. But the man "drank a great deal" and "presumably left of his own accord" for Dallas. "I consider his case unsatisfactory."⁶³

Immigrants who fared best were those with relatives and friends in Fort Worth. Simon indicated as such in a 1906 letter to New York headquarters. Recommending that the agency send an unskilled young man named Sigmund Patkoosky, Simon wrote: "In this case, as usual, . . . relatives here are willing that he should come and will take care of him here."⁶⁴ Another successful example of chain migration facilitated by the agency

*Libby Kruger Zalefsky
with her children,
William (left) and
Morris Bernard, "M. B."*

*The brothers, who anglicized
their name to Zale, operated the
Zale Jewelry store chain.*

*(Courtesy M. B. & Edna Zale
Foundation, Dallas.)*

was Charles Rubin, a tailor with a sibling in the same trade. He seemed content cleaning and pressing at his brother David Rubin's tailor shop at 205 East Twelfth Street.⁶⁵ Morris Antner, yet another IRO removal, had a sister in Fort Worth. He opened a popular restaurant, the Broiler.⁶⁶ A year after Antner's Texas arrival, he prevailed upon Simon to have the IRO send his brother-in-law, Isaac Freiman.⁶⁷

Julius Kruger, brother of Main Street watchmaker Sam Kruger, was an IRO-sponsored immigrant who easily integrated into Fort Worth's mercantile scene. Within months of his 1906 arrival, he saved enough money to bring his wife, Manyes, and their son, Moische, across the ocean from Russia.⁶⁸ In 1911, the Kruger brothers approached Simon about reuniting them with their sister Libby Zalefsky whose family had been in New York for several years. Simon assented. Objectively, the Zalefskys did not meet IRO criteria. Libby's husband, Sam Zalefsky, had few job skills. He had worked in New York as a wallpaper hanger and house

painter but preferred performing informal duties at a neighborhood synagogue. The Kruger brothers, with their jewelry store that catered to railroad employees and the carriage trade, could likely have saved money to cover train fare for their relatives.⁶⁹ But Simon evidently viewed the Krugers as hardworking, upstanding, religious-minded individuals who contributed to the commonweal. On January 31, 1911, in an overnight telegram to the IRO, Simon issued the following instructions:

Please send at once Sam Zalewsky [*sic*] and family, relatives able to provide work, but cannot contribute toward transportation. I understand Zalewsky [*sic*] has disposed of his household goods and is awaiting to be sent to FtWorth [*sic*]. If it is possible for you to send him I believe it will be desirable.⁷⁰

Besides family ties, Simon gave weight in his recommendations to bonds of friendship. A baker, Albert Cromberger, arrived in 1906 with a fifteen-dollar-a-week position at Oscar Rubin's German Bakery. Within four years, this IRO veteran opened his own Cromberger Bakery at 303 South Jennings Avenue.⁷¹ During the interlude when Albert Cromberger was establishing his bakery, the IRO appeared keen on sending yet another baker. This applicant, a thirty-two-year-old New Yorker, had ten years' residence in the United States and enough savings to "open up a bakery to cater to the Jewish trade." Simon kept this applicant dangling for two weeks while he surveyed the local "bread-baking" scene. In the end, he discouraged the New Yorker from coming, citing a surfeit of bakeries. He may well have been protecting Albert Cromberger from competition.⁷²

In another instance, IRO headquarters recommended two peddlers, Israel Leder and Nachem Berman. Simon assented to Israel Leder because he was a friend of Nathan Ratner, "who is a successful fruit and vegetable peddler [and] tells me he will divide his route with Leder."⁷³ As for Nachem Berman, Simon wrote, "The immediate . . . small towns . . . generally are pretty well supplied with mercantile establishments If the man is active, I have no doubt that he can get along, but it is possible that some smaller community would suit him better."⁷⁴ The former applicant was sent. The latter was not.

Telegram requesting assistance for the Zale family. (Courtesy the American Jewish Historical Society, New York and Waltham.)

Having relatives and references in Fort Worth did not guarantee entrée. Another criterion by which Simon evaluated sponsors was whether or not they participated in local Jewish organizations. When a sister-in-law of Aaron Schiffer, a successful Fort Worth entrepreneur, appealed to the IRO to be placed in Cowtown, Simon vetoed the move. Nor did he mince words about the brother-in-law: "He does not contribute to any . . . charity . . . organizations of this city and I do not see why we should assist in bringing his sister-in-law to Fort Worth."⁷⁵ Simon was also disdainful of Joe Dworkin, a Fort Worth dry goods merchant whose brother-in-law, Louis Goldstein, requested IRO assistance. The Dworkins, Simon wrote, "are not particularly desirable citizens here. Unless he [the immigrant] shows a very clean record, I would not want him here under any circumstances." The brother-in-law never came.⁷⁶

Simon vented his dislike of Sam Nathan, a tailor and haberdasher who had prospered in Fort Worth for six years, then

returned to New York City flush with \$2,200 in savings. Nathan rapidly lost his money in a New York business venture. By 1910 he and his family were begging to return to Texas at IRO expense. "He claims he can easily work himself up again in his old town, to wit: Ft. Worth," the IRO optimistically wrote the Fort Worth agent. "Case is urgent and we would appreciate it if you would send us your pleasure in this case by wire, collect." Simon, irate at the tailor's chutzpa, took his time responding. When he finally answered in writing a month later, he advised headquarters that Sam Nathan was *persona non grata* because "he did not contribute to Jewish organizations and was indifferent to our communal affairs." The local agent elaborated, "I do not feel that we ought to take it upon ourselves and especially upon the charity organizations here, of providing for him should he come here penniless. My recommendation is that you do not send him."⁷⁷

Another measure by which Simon judged extended-family cases was the family's work ethic. When Rachel Oginsky asked the IRO to send her and her children to Fort Worth, where her husband was a banana peddler, the agency was reluctant. The IRO suggested that her Texas spouse underwrite all transportation costs. Simon successfully pleaded, "They are all poor people, but making good citizens, and we would be glad if you could see your way clear to send this family to Fort Worth."⁷⁸

A number of "removals" who lacked familial connections were nonetheless welcomed. Simon's correspondence files show that cobblers, unlike tailors, fared well in Fort Worth, a reflection on a town where sturdy boots were more important than fine suits. Nathan Fuchs, a shoemaker who anglicized his surname to Fox, had been dispatched in 1904 to Gainesville, ninety miles north of Fort Worth, on the edge of Indian Territory. Seeking a town with more foot traffic, he moved on his own to Fort Worth and by 1905 had a shop at 1113 Main Street, three blocks from the train station.⁷⁹

Another cobbler, Wolf Moses, a twenty-nine-year-old sent by the IRO in February 1906 as a "direct removal," worked for an established, non-Jewish shoemaker who paid him nine dollars a week. That seemed a princely sum until the Texas &

*Wolf Moses, 1926. The IRO
placed cobbler Moses in Fort
Worth in February 1906.
(Courtesy R. D. Moses,
Fort Worth.)*

Pacific Railway overcharged Moses \$9.04 for shipping his household goods, which arrived damaged. On the cobbler's behalf, Simon contested the bill of lading. It took more than a year of correspondence to straighten it out. Moses, a native of Minsk who had spent three frustrating years in Brooklyn, was grateful and worked hard. In less than a year, he became his employer's partner.⁸⁰ Later, he had his own shoe repair business at 107 East Belknap Street and still later at 108 West Ninth Street. His establishment became a gathering place for bus drivers, business people, and even ministers. Ironically, Wolf (or William, as "a lot of Gentile people called him,") detested the shoe repair business. He refused to teach the trade to his son, calling it "filthy" work. Despite that attitude, his work ethic was strong. Without requesting aid from the IRO, Moses sent for his wife, two children, two brothers, and two sisters.⁸¹

Teachers also fared well in Fort Worth. Simon, aware of Jewish communal needs, snapped up Hebrew educators. When he

learned that David Goldberg, a young Hebrew teacher related to some longtime local residents, was seeking transportation to Texas, he wrote the IRO, "Rabbi [Charles] Blumenthal [at Ahavath Sholom] . . . is ready to give Mr. Goldberg a position as assistant teacher. . . . If he makes good in the position offered him, he will be self-supporting."⁸² Sam Resnick, another pedagogue with Cowtown kin, was notified by wire that the IRO had approved his move to Fort Worth.⁸³ Resnick, who had operated a Hebrew school in Russia, became a force in the local Zionist movement.

Simon sometimes overruled the IRO's judgment. In one such case, he asked the IRO to send Barnett Oppenheim, whose brother-in-law, Yankev Zager, was a Fort Worth peddler. The IRO had previously sent the Oppenheim family to Buffalo, New York, with disappointing results. The family had returned to New York City. The IRO had no intention of giving them a second chance at charity, particularly since they lived in a nicely furnished apartment. Simon was insistent, arguing that the man's unemployed daughter, a stenographer, could find a good position in Fort Worth. Ultimately, Simon helped raise twenty-five dollars toward transportation costs. The New York office relented, "Out of deference to your recommendation in the matter, we will accept it and pay the balance necessary."⁸⁴ Simon ultimately put Oppenheim's son, Hyman, to work in his office as a law clerk.⁸⁵

Simon's instincts were not always borne out, at least not immediately. He gave the approval in 1910 for the IRO to send Susie Brecher to Fort Worth, where her husband, Sam, had "impressed [everyone] as a man who will unquestionably take care of his family." With that assurance, the IRO loaned Susie Brecher an additional fifty dollars, payable over three months. When the note came due, she had paid nothing. Simon sent "four or five letters to Mrs. Brecher, but she fail[ed] to respond." Finally, he gave up and told the New York office, "I have seen her husband on several occasions and I feel quite sure that he has nothing to pay this note with."⁸⁶ Simon was not about to embarrass or place financial demands on the family. The tone of his letters regarding the debt was firm and without complaint.

Simon's interactions with the national office, and presumably with immigrants, remained businesslike and polite. Even when describing negative encounters, he generally did not get irate nor vent exasperation. Because of his eastern European cultural background, he had a feel for who these immigrants were and what to expect of them. Judging from his academic success at the college and professional level, he also understood Progressive Era thinking. He could navigate between two worlds and negotiate between two ways of thinking. Essentially, Simon became a benevolent gatekeeper, deciding who among the IRO's immigrant pool could enter Fort Worth and who would not, who merited financial aid and who got not a cent. "It was in his blood to help people in a *paterfamilias* way," observed his grandson.⁸⁷ Simon's position proved critical in shaping his community. He summoned to Fort Worth individuals and families he believed would contribute to the commonweal and tried to insure that immigrants arrived with an emotional support system in place that could cushion the culture shock. For example, Simon once discouraged the IRO from sending a plumber⁸⁸ who lacked local ties yet welcomed a peddler who did. As Midwest historian Hal Rothman has observed, "When the newcomers were relatives, family ties assured a protected environment and rapid socialization."⁸⁹

Traveling Agents

Simon's measured tone and polite demeanor with the IRO were not replicated in every locale. Fort Worth's interactions with the New York agency proved far more positive and fruitful than the experiences of a number of other Texas Jewish communities. Simon's proactive involvement during the immigrant selection phase had much to do with his success. He never blindly agreed to receive a set quota of immigrants. Other towns did.

One of the IRO's placement strategies was to send a "traveling agent" into a region to visit targeted cities that had no history with the agency.⁹⁰ At each stop, the agent met with Jewish community leaders to drum up sympathy toward the immigrants and support for the IRO. The agent's goal was to convince each city to

accept a monthly quota of immigrants. Imbued with altruism, Jewish communities signed up. In many a Texas locale, the resulting culture shock, by both émigrés and townspeople, led to negative experiences, tension, acrimony, and severance of ties to the IRO.

For example in December 1904 the Jews of Marshall, a major railroad stop near the Louisiana line, agreed to resettle one family per month. Then they reneged six months later "after hard work and a good deal of trouble and expense."⁹¹ Palestine, an east Texas county seat, also reduced its quota after agreeing to sponsor two refugee families per month. "We have received the one you have sent us and are having a great deal of trouble in finding any thing for him to do," wrote a local volunteer. "I am afraid we will have to send him off. Business is very dull here."⁹² Jewish residents of Paris, Texas, provided more details when they withdrew from the IRO. "We regret to inform you that we have had a great deal of trouble with the people you sent here," the local liaison wrote. "[One client] misrepresented and made false statements both to you and to us. He is not married to the woman he came here with, she being his sister. . . . He and his sister quarreled, thereby creating a disturbance and scandal in public to our great sorrow and mortification."⁹³

Houston's IRO liaison was more blunt, "Don't send us any more people." The Houston agent wrote that he had placed an IRO immigrant in a job that paid eighteen dollars per week. "He worked 3 weeks and left without saying goodbye."⁹⁴ Austin's Jewish community was likewise "disgusted." According to the secretary of the city's immigration society:

We have had enough experience with two families, for whom we have done everything in our power to start them out and make something of them, but regret to say that all our faithful work has been done in vain. The people are so disgusted the way the newcomers have done that I do believe should another family come, they would have to starve as the people have lost all faith and hope in them."⁹⁵

Sherman, a farming and college town near the Oklahoma line, also backed out of its agreement to resettle "one family per

month for four or five months." After welcoming its first immigrant family, Sherman's representative wrote the IRO, "The weather is cold, and labor is scarce. We would advise you not to send any more families here for a while." The letter elicited an angry reply from New York: "If you were here with us today and saw the immense number of people that begged us for work, you would . . . give us free reign. . . . Terrible pressure is brought to bear upon us by the ever-increasing immigration." ⁹⁶

The tone of these letters and the tension between local and national headquarters was not uncommon. Jack Glazier, in *Dispersing the Ghetto*, and Robert A. Rockaway, in *Words of the Uprooted*, document ongoing clashes between community representatives and New York staffers. Glazier terms such discord inevitable, particularly since "the traveling agents said little or nothing about the [likelihood] of problem cases." He adds that the "dialogue between the main office and the cooperating communities frequently placed their self-conceived best interest ahead of the IRO's conception of an American Jewish commonwealth and the limits of local altruism,"⁹⁷ Rockaway notes the "rancor," "annoyance," "dissatisfaction," and sarcasm evident in some correspondence. In Champaign, Illinois, for example, the unscheduled arrival of unskilled workers who spoke little English placed a weighty burden upon the agent on the scene. He had to become meter, greeter, banker, and cultural broker.⁹⁸

Simon, because he fostered chain migration, was not as responsible for meeting and greeting immigrants who missed train connections. He could delegate that responsibility and many others to the sponsoring families. He knew first hand how far blood relatives would go to help one another. He worked for family reunification knowing that *mishpocheh* would provide a safety net and come to the rescue far more often than an employer or a social worker.

During this period of American history, Jewish philanthropic leaders and social workers tended to be Jews of German descent who believed they knew best how to resettle and Americanize eastern European émigrés. Their experiences were not first hand. U. M. Simon may have been patrician, but he was not a German

patrician. He was self-confident and self-made. He was a role model to the immigrants, an example of what their American-born children could become. His success may have imbued the Fort Worth arrivals with added incentive and determination to do well in Texas.

Just as Simon's letters to New York lacked acrimony, the IRO's letters to him were polite. His track record shows he was not easily bluffed by emotional pleas from the agency or the immigrants. Whenever Simon delayed answering queries from New York, the agency gingerly inquired whether he had received previous letters on a particular client. Simon, in due time, would apologetically explain that he was "out of town," involved in legal work, still investigating local conditions, or awaiting figures from the board of trade. He was a reliable agent who generally followed through.

Toward the end of 1912, unanswered correspondence accumulated in Simon's office. The agency wrote asking if its letters "may have gone astray."⁹⁹ After seven weeks of silence, Simon responded, "I beg to say to you that the reason I have not replied to your letter sooner is because of the death of my mother . . . last week. She had been critically ill for some little time before that, and I had not given much attention to my business."¹⁰⁰

With sensitivity, David Bressler wrote back, "I wish to convey to you my sincere sympathy in the irreparable loss you have just sustained. I can feel for you, the more deeply since my own beloved mother was laid to her eternal rest only a short time ago."¹⁰¹

The Galveston Movement

Resettling immigrants on an individual basis was proving too slow to make a dent in New York's ghetto population. More than two million Jewish refugees had entered the United States between 1880 and 1907. More than seventy-five percent settled in the Northeast. This influx taxed city services and fueled anti-immigration sentiment.¹⁰² Banker Jacob Schiff was impressed with the IRO's statistics: 29,513 Jews removed during the agency's first six years of existence, with eighty-five percent remaining in the

places to which they were sent.¹⁰³ Schiff, a godfather of American Jewish philanthropy, gambled that with a \$500,000 subsidy and a convincing public-relations campaign, boatloads of immigrants would choose the West over the congested Northeast if they could bypass New York. One German steamship line made regular trips to Galveston every three weeks. Schiff's grand plan was to divert "Jewish immigration from the Eastern seaboard . . . to the territory west of the Mississippi River with Galveston as the Port of Entry."¹⁰⁴ Rabbi Henry Cohen was in Galveston in a position to work with a new agency and to greet each immigrant at the dock. Thus in July 1907, the IRO opened the Jewish Immigrants' Information Bureau (JIIB) in Galveston. Terming the states west of the Mississippi "bureau territory," the JIIB utilized and expanded upon the network of small-town reception committees begun by the IRO.

The Galveston experiment lasted from the summer of 1907 to 1914, with ships carrying Jewish refugees from the North Sea to Galveston Bay. Some years as few as 126 refugees chose the southern route. In its peak years, up to three thousand eastern European Jews opted for Galveston. In all, ten thousand (less than four percent of total Jewish immigration for those years) disembarked in Galveston. Of these arrivals, three thousand remained in Texas.¹⁰⁵

The Galveston Movement kept Fort Worth's B'nai B'rith lodge and its Ladies Hebrew Aid Society busier than ever. There was much overlap with the earlier and ongoing IRO work. Simon continued dealing with the IRO's New York office while serving on his city's JIIB committee. Some immigrants who arrived in Fort Worth via Galveston arranged for Simon to help bring relatives from New York. For example, in 1909 the IRO headquarters corresponded with Fort Worth about Hyman Ellison, an unemployed New York immigrant who asked to be sent to his Texas uncle, H. Abramowitz. Simon responded in the affirmative:

We brought Abramowitz to Fort Worth via Galveston from Europe and he is just now getting on his feet, which is saying a great deal as he has a large family. . . . I find Abramowitz

entirely worthy and dependable, although he is unable to contribute anything toward the transportation of Ellison. He and his friends . . . guarantee that Ellison and his family will be taken care of here. . . . I hope that you will find it possible to send this family here.¹⁰⁶

Two years later, Ellison, who remained in Forth Worth until his death in 1917, sponsored another IRO immigrant, Louis Romashkin.¹⁰⁷

During these years, the local Council of Jewish Women section began filling an important niche. In February 1907, five months before the first boatload of Jewish immigrants docked in Galveston, NCJW members opened a nonsectarian Americanization school with biweekly evening classes taught at the Tarrant County Courthouse. Describing the school's first four months of operation, NCJW president Polly Mack wrote:

Realizing that foreign immigration was on the increase in our city, and appreciating the fact that the struggles of these newcomers would be severe in the absence of some knowledge of English on their part, [we] resolved to organize a night school. The sessions were well attended and the scholars, aged from 14 to 45, manifested much interest in their work, and have thus far given every evidence of their ability to master the English language and to assimilate American ideals.¹⁰⁸

As Galveston immigrants began arriving, the school expanded.

In November 1912, the IRO contacted Simon with an urgent request to locate Shiman Dunetz, a Galveston immigrant. Dunetz had sent his relatives in Kiev a letter bearing a Fort Worth postmark. New York's Kiev Society beseeched IRO headquarters to track down the man. Bressler in turn asked Simon to find the immigrant. Although Fort Worth's Jewish community was small and clannish, it took the local IRO agent over a month to find Dunetz, because by then the city's population exceeded seventy-three thousand. Finally, Simon located the missing man in a boarding house at 300 North Cherry Street. Simon assured the agency that the immigrant was "well, at work, and doing very well."¹⁰⁹

The search for Shiman Dunetz, stretching from Kiev to Fort Worth via New York, is indicative of the widespread attention

given the Galveston Movement. It captured the imagination and the headlines. It was a dramatic undertaking heralded with more fanfare and publicity than the IRO's placement program. Yet, during the life span of the Galveston immigration movement, from 1907 to 1914, the IRO's New York office was far more successful than its Gulf Coast offshoot. During the same seven-year period, the IRO resettled four times as many Jews as the Galveston movement: 40,186 clients compared with 10,000 who went west via Galveston. Working case by case instead of by the boatload, the IRO's numbers were much higher, its politics less complicated, and its transportation costs significantly lower.¹¹⁰ The comparison illuminates why the Galveston movement was short-lived.

Personal and Institutional Postscripts

When the Galveston Movement ended, the work of the IRO went on, albeit at a slower and slower pace. The outbreak of World War I in Europe disrupted immigration. In 1914, the IRO placed 3,501 clients across the nation; in 1915 the number dropped to 1,821; in 1916 it dipped to 1,434, and in 1917 to 1,006.

Although the work of the IRO was winding down, the immigrants' lives went on. Many of Fort Worth's seventy-two IRO cases stood the test of time. Nineteen of these families, or twenty-six percent, were still in business or in residence in 1920, according to the local city directory. This percentage is remarkably higher than retention rates in cities similarly scrutinized. Robert Rockaway's study of Detroit reports that of eighty-one men the IRO resettled in 1905, "ten left within the year and 85 percent of those remaining left within three years." Out of another 101 men sent to Detroit in 1907, "only thirteen were located in the city in 1909."¹¹¹ Jack Glazier, focusing on Indianapolis, also charted a dramatic decline, "The number dropped from forty-five in a 1907 sample to eight by 1908 and six in 1909."¹¹² Marc Lee Raphael, tracking IRO immigrants sent to Columbus, Ohio, found only five of twenty-four men assigned there in 1905 still listed in subsequent city directories up to 1910.¹¹³ Glazier, Rockaway, and Raphael conclude that the IRO's boast of a seventy-five to ninety-four percent retention rate is exaggerated. The Fort Worth

numbers, while higher than those in Detroit, Indianapolis and Columbus, bolster the contention that the IRO inflated its retention rates.

City directories are far from comprehensive and not always a reliable way to track foreign-born arrivals. Many immigrants anglicized their names. Others left the first town to which they were sent but remained west of the Mississippi. Indeed, four IRO clients gravitated to Fort Worth from other cities: two from Gainesville, one from Houston, and another from Austin. The names of additional IRO families not listed in Fort Worth's 1920 directory show up in other sources such as Jewish newspapers, synagogue records, and Texas tombstones in Wichita Falls, Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas.¹¹⁴

The columns of the *Jewish Monitor*, Fort Worth's weekly paper, flesh out many an immigrant's life and provide further evidence of acculturation and *tzedaka*. Nathan Fox, for example, is listed in 1919 among the \$10 donors to the Kobrina Relief Fund.¹¹⁵ Manyes Kruger, Julius's wife, teamed up with a fellow immigrant to raise \$75 for the "war sufferer's fund."¹¹⁶ The family of Wolf Moses, the shoemaker who detested his trade, pledged a dollar a month to the local Hebrew Relief Committee.¹¹⁷ Today, Wolf Moses' seventy-two-year-old son conducts oral history interviews for the Fort Worth Jewish Archives. His grandsons operate one of the region's largest glass-installation businesses.

Sam Resnick, the immigrant Hebrew teacher, proved such a popular instructor that the *Jewish Monitor* profiled him in 1915, noting that he was orphaned as a youth and studied at Lithuania's famed Slobotka and Telz yeshivas. By 1920, he was secretary of Fort Worth's Zionist Victory Celebration.¹¹⁸ David Goldberg, the other Hebrew teacher who arrived with a job awaiting him, enlisted in the Army during World War I. Profiled on the pages of the *Monitor*, "Private Dave Goldberg" was lauded as the top "pastry chef" in his division. According to the newspaper, "Goldberg was so inspired by the gefillete [*sic*] fish served at the Pesach Seder [in Fort Worth] that he made some for the Remount

*Julius Kruger (left) with brother Sam Kruger and unidentified woman.
Sam, a jeweler, sponsored Julius's 1906 IRO placement in Fort Worth.
(Courtesy Bert Kruger Smith, Austin.)*

[Depot's] men. . . They had several fights to see who would get it first."¹¹⁹ Susie Brecher, who in 1910 defaulted on a fifty-dollar note, became upwardly mobile. During the summer of 1915, her daughter Etta was mentioned in the *Monitor's* social columns among the guests at an engagement party.¹²⁰ Susie's husband, Sam Brecher, served as a building committee member of the Agudath Achim sick benefit lodge.¹²¹ The Brechers, according to an advertisement in the 1920 city directory, became proprietors of a ladies' ready-to-wear store "where women and style get acquainted."

Another case of upward mobility was Abraham Jacob Cooles, whom Simon described in 1910 as "struggling but reliable."¹²² Cooles' wife and four children, who reached Fort Worth with

train fare paid by the IRO, worked in the family furniture and hotel supply business. A daughter, Fanny, married Meyer Gernsbacher, whose father had cofounded the B'nai B'rith lodge and the Reform temple.¹²³

The Kruger/Zale story is well-known throughout Texas. This extended family left Fort Worth for Wichita Falls, the county seat of a west Texas region rich in newly discovered oil. Jeweler Sam Kruger had been offered that city's Hamilton watch franchise. His nephews, Morris Bernard, or "M. B.," and William Zale branched off on their own, opening a jewelry store in 1924 that offered the innovative option of installment buying. The Zale families became pillars of the Wichita Falls Jewish community as well as retail jewelry giants and philanthropic leaders. Today, the M. B. & Edna Zale Foundation, which began in 1951, has assets of \$34 million. It donates about \$1.8 million annually, primarily to institutions that shelter the homeless (including Atlanta's Genesis Shelter for newborns and their families), feed the hungry, and provide medical care. In its first decade, the foundation pioneered efforts to award college and medical school scholarships to minority students. According to the Institute for Texan Cultures, the Zale Foundation was created because "two immigrant youths from Russia never forgot how it feels to be poor" and to be strangers in a strange land.¹²⁴

Last but not least, U. M. Simon, B'nai B'rith's volunteer placement agent, continued his Jewish community involvement. He chaired the city's United Jewish Campaign and served twice as temple president and once as B'nai B'rith lodge president. He organized the Fort Worth branch of the American Jewish Relief Committee, which distributed funds to European Jews suffering during the war.¹²⁵ At home in Fort Worth, the war stimulated the local economy, creating a bumper crop of jobs. As the High Holy Days of 1915 approached, Simon took out a half-page advertisement in the *Jewish Monitor* to broadcast this public appeal:

As all of our Jews in Fort Worth are prospering, do not forget the thousands, nay hundreds of thousands of coreligionists who are

left without shelter and food and who are praying these holidays in the fields and woods not knowing where to go next.¹²⁶

Conclusions

Was the IRO a success in Fort Worth? The answer is a resounding *yes* by multiple measures. A history of the city's Jewish institutions written in 1915 asserts that each of the IRO immigrants remaining in Fort Worth had become "self-sustaining."¹²⁷ Earlier that year, Simon requested several copies of the U.S. Constitution translated into Yiddish. The agency mailed him six bilingual copies, printed in booklets appended with "questions and answers appertaining to citizenship." For some removals, the IRO's goal of Americanization was nearly at hand.¹²⁸

The IRO also proved to be a catalyst for the creation of Jewish institutions. Fort Worth's Orthodox women developed the Ladies Hebrew Relief Society to assist the new arrivals; the Reform women launched an Americanization school; and in 1907 local Jewish men established a Hebrew Free Loan Association. Through the latter institution, immigrants seeking business financing could receive an interest-free loan so long as two fellow Jews co-signed. This lending institution, also known by its Hebrew name, *Gemiluth Chasodim*, continues its work today. Among its officers are descendants of those who received loans early on.

The Ladies Hebrew Relief Society, begun in 1903, disbanded in the summer of 1915 as the flow of new immigrant arrivals ebbed and as earlier immigrants became self sufficient. The group reconstituted itself later that year as the Auxiliary to the Hebrew Institute and today continues actively functioning as the Congregation Ahavath Sholom Ladies Auxiliary. During the auxiliary's initial years, it became involved with beautifying Ahavath Sholom's sanctuary, upgrading its Sabbath School (located next door in a building called the Hebrew Institute), and raising money through lawn parties and rummage sales for the Red Cross and for Jewish causes.¹²⁹

The NCJW's Americanization School, started in 1907, continued between the world wars and during the post-World War II era. Some of its volunteer teachers were called back into service to

assist Soviet families who settled in Fort Worth during the 1970s refusenik era.

Prior to the IRO's presence in Fort Worth, the local B'nai B'rith was primarily a social organization. It, along with the Jewish community collectively, maintained a low profile. By the outbreak of World War I, the lodge was quick to assert itself publicly and politically if the need arose as it did in early May 1915. At that time, many immigrants sold fruits and vegetables on city street corners, undercutting grocers' prices. This practice may have been commonplace in New York, but not in small-town Texas.¹³⁰ An association of butchers and grocers lobbied city officials to prohibit sidewalk vendors. According to a news account, "The police commissioner, Mr. Mord Hurdleston, issued an order driving these men off the streets."¹³¹ Outraged, a B'nai B'rith committee came to the defense of the peddlers who were "flabbergasted . . . that they would not be allowed to earn their bread even by the sweat of the brow."¹³² The B'nai B'rith delegation "immediately went to see [the police commissioner] [A]fter explaining that these men were engaged in honest efforts to make a living and that many of them would be thrown upon charity if this means of livelihood were taken from them, the commissioner withdrew the order."¹³³ Clearly, by 1915 B'nai B'rith lodge members had political clout and were not too timid to use it to assist fellow Jews. Such assertiveness was a direct, if unanticipated consequence of IRO resettlement efforts.

Another way to measure the IRO's work in Fort Worth is to categorize immigrants under three headings the same way the New York agency did. Twenty-eight of the immigrants who reached Fort Worth had relatives already there. In bureaucratic parlance, these were "family reunification cases." Thirteen had friends in Fort Worth requesting their presence. Twenty-seven others were "direct placements," meaning strangers matched with job opportunities. The latter group, the agency's priority population, comprised but 37.5 percent of the total. The Fort Worth figures are at variance with IRO rhetoric. Surprisingly, these figures mirror percentages buried in IRO statistics. The IRO Executive Committee's 1910 progress report includes a table

showing that, nationwide, only 38 percent of the agency's clients were direct removals.¹³⁴ "Original cases regularly comprised less than half the annual total," Glazier observed. "The IRO had greater success even in . . . economic slowdowns, in helping people reunite with kin or friends in interior communities."¹³⁵ The agency's own statistics point up the difference between rhetoric and reality.

Had the IRO turned into an agency stressing family reunification, its numbers might have been greater, its retention rates higher, and its image more positive and personal. Instead, it chose as its objective jobs, which were subject to economic downturns and varying prerequisites. U. M. Simon grasped what worked best and shrewdly used the IRO as a vehicle to reunite families. It was not hard for him to see that immigrants fared better when surrounded by supportive relatives. His family history was proof of that premise.

The nature of Fort Worth, Texas, itself may have encouraged Simon's assertive stance toward the New York agency. Fort Worth, with its frontier mentality and its view of itself as peripheral to the mainstream, was a city accustomed to operating by its own rules and forging its own patterns. This maverick mindset, which lured many of its pioneers, did not disappear as the city grew. The independent spirit was evident among Jewish residents, from the early merchants who resisted any impulse to start a synagogue to the B'nai B'rith committee that leaped to the defense of street corner vendors. U. M. Simon, also marching to a different drummer, administered the IRO's immigrant resettlement program as he wished, adapting the agency's guidelines to suit his community. He took the initiative and made a success of an immigrant placement program that could easily have faltered and failed. The result was a resettlement effort that nurtured new arrivals, shaped Jewish institutions, and reaped benefits beyond the New York agency's expectations.

NOTES

¹ The author acknowledges research assistance from Esther Winesanker, who typed note cards on each immigrant, proofreader Donna Levine, Dr. Richard Selcer, and the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, which awarded a fellowship that enabled her to begin writing this essay.

² U. M. Simon to IRO (night telegram), January 31–February 1, 1911, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection, American Jewish Historical Society, New York (hereafter cited as IRO Collection). The Zale family's original name is spelled several different ways on IRO documents. However, both the 1920 U.S. Census and the *Fort Worth City Directory* from 1914 to 1932 spell the family surname "Zalefsky." By 1935, it is spelled Zale. Sam Zalefsky is best remembered in Fort Worth for having painted the synagogue. Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Tarrant County, Texas, Enumeration District 92, Sheet 12, Line 56.

³ Robert A. Rockaway, "I Feel as if Newly Born": Immigrant Letters to the Industrial Removal Office," *American Jewish Archives* 45 (Fall/Winter 1993): 159–192.

⁴ David M. Bressler, "Distribution," in Charles S. Bernheimer, ed., *The Russian Jew in the United States: Studies of Social Conditions in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, with a Description of Rural Settlements* (Philadelphia, 1905), 367, 369.

⁵ The IRO compiled state-by-state totals but not city statistics. It dispatched 1,560 removals to Texas. The figures for neighboring states are 261 to Arkansas, 680 to Louisiana, and 311 to Oklahoma. Jack Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto: Relocation of Jewish Immigrants Across America* (Ithaca, 1998), Appendix, Table 1, 196; figures for the number of immigrants sent to Fort Worth were compiled from IRO ledgers, forms, and correspondence.

⁶ David M. Bressler, "What Is the Removal Office?" paper to National Conference of Jewish Charities, May 27, 1904, Microfilm #2500, Klau Library, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati.

⁷ Bressler, "Distribution," 367, 369.

⁸ David M. Bressler, "Report of the Executive Committee of the Industrial Removal Office for the Year Ending December 31, 1910," 11, Box I, folder 5, IRO Collection.

⁹ Simon to IRO, March 28, 1906, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

¹⁰ William Toll, "The Double Revolution of Modern Jewry," *Reviews in American Jewish History* 12 (June 1984): 230–235.

¹¹ Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto*, 15–28; *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1972), s.v., "Baron de Hirsch Fund," "Hirsch, Baron Maurice de"; Robert A. Rockaway, *Words of the Uprooted: Jewish Immigrants in Early Twentieth-Century America* (Ithaca, 1998), 18–30, 205–209.

¹² Orphan Trains, <<http://www.outfitters.com/~melissa/ot/ot.html>> [accessed January 12, 2001]; Orphan Train Heritage Society of America, <http://www.maquoketa.k12.ia.us/orphan_train.html> [accessed November 1, 2000]; The Orphan Trains, <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/orphan/>> [accessed November 1, 2000]; Orphan Trains of Nebraska, <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~neadoptn/Orphan.htm>> [accessed January 12, 2001]; see also Stephen O' Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Boston, 2001).

¹³ David M. Bressler, "The Removal Work, Including Galveston," paper to National Conference of Jewish Charities, May 17, 1910; Bressler, "Report of Executive Committee," 1910.

¹⁴ The socially concerned founders of the IRO, like those involved in the Orphan Train movement, shared the Progressive Era conviction that a great and growing country could resolve all problems posed by the industrial age. The "modern city," despite its pockets of squalor, presented not problems but opportunities for remedial action. In reference to the dark side of progressivism, Teddy Roosevelt, a leading symbol of the era, believed that widespread antisemitism could be curbed if only Jews developed their "Maccabee or fighting side" and participated "more conspicuously in rough and manly work." J. Leonard Bates, *The United States 1898–1928: Progressivism and a Society in Transition* (New York, 1976), 66; see also William L. O'Neill, *The Progressive Years: America Comes of Age* (New York, 1975), and Van Wyck Brooks, *The Confident Years: 1885–1915* (New York, 1952).

¹⁵ Bressler, "Report of Executive Committee," 1910.

¹⁶ Maurice Faber to IRO, n.d. (probably May 1901), Box 64-A, Tyler folder, IRO Collection.

¹⁷ "By the death of Leo Levi, we have lost a friend . . . and an associate whose zeal, patience and judgment were of incalculable value and continual inspiration to renewed effort. . . . It was largely due to his effort that the work of this committee was instituted. His life, though short in years, was complete in usefulness and his memory, to all who cherish it, will be an incentive to good works." IRO Executive Committee Minutes, January 16, 1904, Box 1, Removal Committee Minutes 1903–1917 folder, IRO Collection.

¹⁸ Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (Dallas, 1989), 265–266.

¹⁹ Maurice Faber to IRO, February 2, 1904, Box 64-A, Tyler folder, IRO Collection.

²⁰ "About 40 of our prominent Israelites assembled at the Knights of Pythias Hall and under the auspices of Mr. Charles Sanger of Waco and Mr. Waldstein of Dallas assisted by Messrs. A. Weber, L. Hirschhorn and Jules Dreyfus of Dallas, effected the organization of a lodge of the independent order of the B'nai B'rith. The name selected was Elias Sanger Lodge." "Fort Worth, Texas," *Southwestern Jewish Sentiment*, August 2, 1901. Later that month, B'nai B'rith representatives organized new lodges in Gainesville, eighty miles north of Fort Worth, and Texarkana, three hundred miles east. Texas' earliest B'nai B'rith Lodges include Dallas, founded in 1873; Waco, 1873; San Antonio, 1874; Victoria, 1874, Tyler, 1884; Austin, 1875; Galveston, 1875; Kilgore/Marshall, 1876; Corsicana, 1877; Houston, 1894, and El Paso, 1901. Information researched by Barbara Pittman, B'nai B'rith Texarkoma Regional Administrator, Houston; Fort Worth's first experience with B'nai B'rith was in 1876 when "brothers" from Waco and Dallas took the train there and helped charter Lodge 269. During an economic downturn several years later, the lodge disintegrated. When a new lodge was organized in 1901, none of the members were aware of the earlier effort. See *Fort Worth Daily Democrat*, November 21, 1876.

²¹ Portland, Los Angeles, and San Francisco exemplify places where B'nai B'rith brought together diverse elements of the Jewish community. William Toll, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class: Portland Jewry over Four Generations* (Albany, NY, 1982), 25–26.

²² "On Tuesday last, at the parlors of the Delaware Hotel, the organization of [National] Council of Jewish Women was perfected with a membership of twenty-six. The following are the officers: Mrs. N. Brann, president; Mrs. M. Schloss, vice president; Mrs. L. E. Cohn,

secretary; Miss Sara V. Carb, treasurer." "Fort Worth, Texas," *Southwestern Jewish Sentiment*, November 1, 1901.

²³ Joyce Antler, *The Journey Home: How Jewish Women Shaped Modern America* (New York: 1997), 1-4.

²⁴ Founding Documents Box, Beth-El Congregation Archives, Fort Worth (hereafter cited as Beth-El Archives).

²⁵ Polly Mack, "Annual Report, Fort Worth Section, [National] Council of Jewish Women," May 6, 1907, NCJW Box, Annual Reports folder, Beth-El Archives.

²⁶ "Sketch of Jewish Institutions of Fort Worth," *Jewish Monitor*, September 10, 1915.

²⁷ Alex Foreman, age 41, Case No. 4857, is listed as a general worker from Russia. The agency paid \$65.10 for train tickets plus \$11.50 for freight and expenses. Removal Record Ledger, January 1903-July 1904, 160, Box 7, IRO Collection.

²⁸ "History of B'nai B'rith," in Max Kaye Scrapbook, No. 2, p. 51, Ahavath Sholom Library, Fort Worth; Removal Record Ledger, 160, Box 7, IRO Collection.

²⁹ Mrs. L. F. [Sarah Levy] Shanblum, "Ladies Hebrew Relief Society," in "Sketch of Jewish Institutions of Fort Worth," *Jewish Monitor*, September 10, 1915.

³⁰ Mack, "Annual Report, Fort Worth Section, [National] Council of Jewish Women," May 6, 1907.

³¹ "Data Showing Conditions of Jewish Life in Small American Cities," Fort Worth Survey, Demographic Surveys Box 123, Surveys Small Towns folder, IRO Collection.

³² Caleb Pirtle III, *Fort Worth: The Civilized West* (Fort Worth, 1980), 61, 73-74, 87, 102; "Fort Worth, TX," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, <<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/FF/hdf1.html>> [accessed January 12, 2001]; Fort Worth Survey, Bureau of Information and Advice, April 9, 1912, IRO Collection; Demographic Surveys Box 123, Surveys Small Towns folder, IRO Collection.

³³ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 21, 1932, "Washer, Nat" envelope, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* Collection, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington.

³⁴ Fort Worth's relationship to Dallas can be compared with Portland's position subordinate to San Francisco. See Toll, *The Making of an Ethnic Middle Class*, 8. For Dallas's early Jewish history see Gerry Cristol, *A Light in the Prairie: Temple Emanu-El of Dallas 1872-1997* (Fort Worth, 1998); Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work* (College Station, Texas, 1999), 82-84, 221-222.

³⁵ Flora Weltman Schiff, "History of the Jews of Fort Worth," *Reform Advocate*, January 24, 1914; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Tarrant County, Texas, Enumeration District 85, Sheet 5, Line 90; Founding Families Box, Gabert folder, Beth-El Archives.

³⁶ "Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served Organizations From the State of Texas," *Waller's Cavalry*, Microfilm R-Z; Julia Kathryn Garrett, *Fort Worth: A Frontier Triumph* (Fort Worth, 1996), 205; J. C. Terrell, *Reminiscences of Early Days of Fort Worth* (Fort Worth, 1906) 58-59; Juliet George Dees, "Panther City Patriarch: Jacob Samuels, 1836-1906," B. H. Levy graduate student essay competition, July 1989, box 4, folder 19, Southern Jewish Historical Society Archives, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC.

³⁷ David Carb, *Sunrise in the West* (New York, 1931), 328, 342-343.

³⁸ Dahlman, who came to Texas by way of Louisiana, was initially a clothier working with his brothers Henry and Aaron. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Tarrant County, Texas, Enumeration District 89, Sheet 11, Line 18; Families Box, Dahlman folder, Beth-El

Archives; University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures, *The Jewish Texans* (San Antonio, 1984), 12.

³⁹ Families Box, Rosen folder, Beth-El Archives.

⁴⁰ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 21, 1932, Families Box, Washer folder, Beth-El Archives.

⁴¹ Schiff, "History of the Jews of Fort Worth," *Reform Advocate*.

⁴² Sander L. Gilman, "Introduction: The Frontier as a Model for Jewish History," in Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain, eds., *Jewries at the Frontier: Accommodation, Identity, Conflict* (Urbana and Chicago, 2000), 18. See also Seth Wolitz's essay, "Bifocality in the Jewish Identity in the Texas-Jewish Experience," in *Jewries at the Frontier*, 185–208.

⁴³ Application, Texas Historical Marker, Cemetery Box, Emanuel Hebrew Rest Historic Marker file, Beth-El Archives.

⁴⁴ Fort Worth Business Box, Fort Worth Jewish Archives, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, Fort Worth; Moses Shanblum, "History of Fort Worth Jewry," *Jewish Monitor*, December 11, 1925.

⁴⁵ *Congregation Ahavath Sholom: 5741–1980* (Fort Worth, 1980), 10–15, 20, 22.

⁴⁶ Hollace Ava Weiner, "The Mixers: The Role of Rabbis Deep in the Heart of Texas," *American Jewish History* 83 (September 1997): 312–315.

⁴⁷ Anne Nathan Cohen, *The Centenary History of Congregation Beth Israel of Houston, Texas, 1854–1954* (Houston, 1954), 8–11, 23, 30–31.

⁴⁸ Lee Shai Weissbach, "East European Immigrants and the Image of Jews in the Small-Town South," *American Jewish History* 83 (September 1997): 243. In Fort Worth, Ahavath Sholom purchased land for an Orthodox cemetery in 1908. By then Emanuel Hebrew Rest included the graves of several non-Jewish spouses, an Orthodox taboo.

⁴⁹ Janis Scarlet Meyerson, telephone interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, October 26, 2000.

⁵⁰ Weissbach, "Image of Jews in Small-Town South," 243; see also Leonard Rogoff, "Synagogue and Jewish Church: A Congregational History of North Carolina" *Southern Jewish History* 1 (1998): 43–82.

⁵¹ According to family lore, an entire village, perhaps as many as seventy people, fled together to the United States. Henry W. Simon Jr., interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, May 30, 2001; "Goldsmith Family Tree," Henry W. Simon Jr. personal papers, Fort Worth; the family's immigration date is in the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Smith County Texas, Enumeration District 97, Sheet 4.

⁵² *Who's Who in American Jewry: a Biographical Directory of Living Jews of the U.S. and Canada* (New York, 1928), s.v. "Simon, Uriah Myer"; Henry Simon interview; Florence W. Sillers, "Overflows of the Mississippi River," in Wirt A. Williams, ed., *History of Bolivar County, Mississippi* (Spartanburg, SC, 1976), 184–185.

⁵³ Rabbi Harvey E. Wessel, "A History of the Jews of Tyler and Smith County, Texas," in Robert Glover and Linda Brown Cross, eds., *Tyler and Smith County, Texas: An Historical Survey* (Tyler, 1976), 203, 254.

⁵⁴ The father died May 26, 1892, and is buried in Tyler's Oakwood Cemetery. Gertrude M. and Donald L. Teter, *Texas Jewish Burials: Alphabetically by Name* (Baytown, TX, 1997), 373. The four oldest Simon children were Sarah, born 1867 in Russia; Leila, born 1876 in Louisiana; Bernard (or Ben), born 1878 in Mississippi, and U. M., born 1879 in Mississippi. David Brown, the German immigrant who later married Sarah Simon, lived with the Si-

mons in Mississippi and worked in the family grocery store. Descendants believe he was a cousin. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Bolivar County, Mississippi, Enumeration District 142, Sheet 46, Line 17; The Simons' two youngest children were Mamie, born 1881 in Mississippi, and Ida, born 1884 in Texas. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Smith County, Texas, Enumeration District 97, Sheet 4.

⁵⁵ Simon's nieces were Bessie, Ida, and Pearl Brown. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Tarrant County, Texas, Enumeration District 18, Sheet 4, Line 2; Bessie Brown married Meredith Carb, son of Fort Worth pioneer Isadore Carb.

⁵⁶ *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, August 24, 1954, clipping in Founding Families Box, Simon folder, Beth-El Archives; *Who's Who in American Jewry*, 1928, s.v. "Simon, Uriah Myer"; B. B. Paddock, *History of Texas: Fort Worth and the Texas Northwest* Edition III (Chicago and New York, 1922), 42–43.

⁵⁷ Theo Mack, Sidney Samuels, and Max K. Mayer practiced law in Fort Worth. *Fort Worth City Directory 1905–06*, microfiche, Genealogy Room, Fort Worth Public Library.

⁵⁸ Natalie Simon, telephone interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, May 30, 2001.

⁵⁹ Julius Heslein, 30, Hungarian, Case No. 4953, June, 1903; B. Goldman, 33, Russian, Case No. 5263; Heslein's wife (Flora) and child, Case No. 6784, arrived in Fort Worth December 1903. Removal Record Ledger, January 1903–July 1904, 163, 169, 200, Box 7, IRO Collection.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, Louis Cohen, 32, Case No. 6263, 50.

⁶¹ Fania Feldman Kruger, "Reb Berrel in America," *All Seeds Blended* (Austin, 1995), 33. Kruger, a widely published poet in her day, married watchmaker Sam Kruger, who brought his brother and sister to Fort Worth via the IRO.

⁶² Simon to IRO, October 14, 1904, handwritten note on Placement Record Form, Appendix I, Placement Records/Cities, 1904–1906, Texas folder, IRO Collection.

⁶³ Simon to IRO, March 22, 1906, handwritten note on Placement Record Form, Appendix I, Placement Records/Cities, 1904–1906, Texas folder, IRO Collection.

⁶⁴ Simon to IRO, March 28, 1906, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁶⁵ Simon to IRO, June 1, 1910, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection; *Fort Worth City Directory 1907*, lists David Rubin at Rubin Tailors, 205 E. 12th Street.

⁶⁶ IRO to Simon, February 9, 1914, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁶⁷ Simon to IRO, May 4 and May 8, 1915, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁶⁸ U. [Julius] Kruger to IRO, August 17, 1906, and IRO to Mr. N. [sic] Kruger, August 21, 1906, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁶⁹ Tommy W. Stringer, *Zale Corporation . . . from the beginning*, (Dallas, 1985), 7.

⁷⁰ Simon to IRO (night telegram), January 31–February 1, 1911, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection; Donald Zale telephone interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, October 26, 2000.

⁷¹ Placement Record form, December 3, 1906, Appendix I, Placement Records/Cities, 1904–1906, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection; *Fort Worth City Directory 1913*.

⁷² IRO to Simon, June 13, 1911; Simon to IRO, June 27, 1911, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁷³ Simon to IRO, September 17, 1910, and August 26, 1911, Box 64, Fort Worth folder. The IRO sent Nathan Ratner to Fort Worth at the request of his elderly father, A. Ratner, who in 1888 had helped the community acquire its first *Sefer Torah*. "Sketch of Jewish Institutions of Fort Worth," *Jewish Monitor*, September 10, 1915; Removal Record Ledger, April

1908–December 1911, 101, Box 10, IRO Collection, lists Israel Leder, 35, Russian, Case No. 31202, no trade, sent to Fort Worth September 1911.

⁷⁴ Simon to IRO, October 3, 1912, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁷⁵ Simon to IRO, November 11, 1910 Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁷⁶ Simon to IRO, September 25, 1912, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection. Simon's negative attitude toward the Dworkins is puzzling. The Dworkins met Simon's usual screening criteria. Longtime congregants at Ahavath Sholom, they were involved in a variety of business enterprises. Joe Dworkin operated Dworkin's Café at Main and Fourth streets, and Hayman Dworkin worked at Dworkin Brothers Shoes at 117 East Exchange Avenue, according to merchant lists compiled by the Fort Worth Jewish Sesquicentennial Committee. See "City Directory Lists," Sesquicentennial Box, Beth-El Archives. Gary Dworkin, a third-generation member of the family, recalled that there were two Joe Dworkins in Fort Worth in 1912. One was his grandfather, a dry goods merchant whose given name was Keshel. The other was a twenty-four-year-old cousin, also in the dry goods business. Gary Dworkin was unfamiliar with U. M. Simon or with any in-laws named Goldstein. Gary Dworkin telephone interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, May 12, 2001.

⁷⁷ IRO to Simon, August 16 and September 7, 1910; Simon to IRO, September 9 and September 17, 1910 Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection,

⁷⁸ Simon to IRO, November 15, 1910, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁷⁹ Placement Record Form, April 11, 1905, containing handwritten note dated April 15, 1905, from Mrs. I. Cohen, Gainesville, in Appendix I, Texas folder, IRO Collection. Of three people sent to Gainesville, located on the Texas side of the Red River, two gravitated to Fort Worth. Nathan Fuchs was described as "doing well" and is listed in *Fort Worth City Directory 1907, 1907–1908, 1909–1910*.

⁸⁰ Placement Record form, April 23, 1906, listing Wolf Moses includes handwritten note of April 26, 1906, from Simon: "Parties are doing very well at present time." Appendix I, Texas folder, IRO Collection; Simon to IRO, March 28, 1906; Simon to IRO, January 15, 1907; IRO to Simon, January 22, 1907; Simon to IRO, January 31, 1907, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection; *Fort Worth City Directory 1906, 1914*.

⁸¹ Wolf Moses' descendants recall his friendship with U. M. Simon. R. D. Moses interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, Fort Worth, December 9, 2000.

⁸² Simon to IRO, November 5, 1909, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection. Charles Blumenthal (c. 1871–1957), a native of Lithuania, was rabbi at Ahavath Sholom from 1908 to 1913 and 1916 to 1919. He also served in Savannah, Buffalo, Shreveport, El Paso, and Waco. He returned to Fort Worth in 1945 and served until his retirement in 1956. "Chronology of Rabbi Charles Blumenthal" Baylor/Texas Collection, Waco.

⁸³ "Have investigated in regard to Sam Resnick. He has a position offered here as assistant teacher in the Hebrew school as soon as he gets here. You may send him without delay." Simon to IRO (wire), November 5, 1914, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁸⁴ IRO to Simon, June 15, 1914, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁸⁵ *Fort Worth City Directory 1920*.

⁸⁶ Simon to IRO, August 26, 1912, and January 18, 1913; IRO to Susie Brecher, November 25, 1912; IRO to Simon, November 25 and December 10, 1913, January 14 and January 22, 1913, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁸⁷ Henry Simon interview.

⁸⁸ Simon to IRO, October 21, 1913, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

⁸⁹ Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto*, 199.

⁹⁰ Rockaway, *Words of the Uprooted*, 39.

⁹¹ Jos. Newman to IRO, June 11, 1905, Box 64-A, Marshall folder, IRO Collection.

⁹² W. M. Klein to IRO, January 18, 1905, Box 64-A, Palestine folder, IRO Collection.

⁹³ A. Goldman, S. Goldman, and William Franks to IRO, April 18, 1905, Box 64-A, Paris folder, IRO Collection.

⁹⁴ Sol Schoenmann, May 7, 1906, handwritten note scribbled on Placement Record Form, Appendix I, Placement Records/Cities, 1904–1906, Texas folder, IRO Collection.

⁹⁵ Max Snaman to IRO, August 31, 1905, Box 64, Austin folder, IRO Collection.

⁹⁶ Assistant Manager IRO to I. Kirchmer, January 23, 1905, Box 64-A, Sherman folder, IRO Collection; Order No. 83, December 28, 1904, Box 15, folder 8, IRO Collection.

⁹⁷ Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto*, 25, 142–145, 150–151, 179.

⁹⁸ Rockaway, *Words of the Uprooted*, 81, 107, 109.

⁹⁹ IRO Cashier to Simon, January 14, 1913, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

¹⁰⁰ Simon to IRO, January 18, 1913, *ibid.* Hannah Goldstein Simon died January 7, 1913, at age 65 and is buried in Fort Worth's Emanuel Hebrew Rest. Teter, *Texas Jewish Burials*, 372.

¹⁰¹ IRO to Simon, January 22, 1913, Box 64, Fort Worth Folder, IRO Collection.

¹⁰² *American Jewish Yearbook* 16 (1914–1915): 352.

¹⁰³ Bressler, "The Removal Work," Report of the Executive Committee of the Industrial Removal Office for the Year Ending December 31, 1913, 2, Box 1, folder 5, IRO Collection.

¹⁰⁴ Bressler, "The Removal Work."

¹⁰⁵ See Bernard Marinbach, *Galveston: Ellis Island of the West* (Albany, NY, 1983); "Rabbi Cohen on Immigration Work," *Texas Jewish Herald*, April 22, 1915; Henry Cohen, "The Galveston Movement: Its First Year," *B'nai B'rith* [Los Angeles] *Messenger*, April 16, 1909, reprinted in *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 18 (January 1986): 114–119.

¹⁰⁶ Simon to IRO, April 26, 1909, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Simon to IRO, April 3, 1911.

¹⁰⁸ Polly Mack, "Annual Report, Fort Worth Section, [National] Council of Jewish Women," May 6, 1907, NCJW Box, Annual Reports folder, Beth-El Archives.

¹⁰⁹ IRO to Simon, November 15, December 5, 12, 19, 1912; Simon to IRO, December 9, 17, 1912, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

¹¹⁰ Jacob Schiff deemed the Galveston movement a failure, as have many historians. The reason is that percentage-wise it brought relatively few immigrants to the Gulf Coast port. Marinbach, writing in 1983 with a broader perspective, credits the Galveston movement with placing immigrants across the Midwest and Far West to places where no Jew had ever lived, a circumstance that led to "recognition of Judaism as one of the three great religious groups in the United States." He also credits the newcomers with spiritually strengthening some faltering synagogues. Marinbach, *Ellis Island of the West*, 181–195.

¹¹¹ Robert A. Rockaway, *The Jews of Detroit: From the Beginning, 1762–1914* (Detroit, 1986), 118, n. 49.

¹¹² Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto*, 204–205, Appendix, Table 8.

¹¹³ Marc Lee Raphael, *Jews & Judaism in a Midwestern Community: Columbus Ohio, 1840–1975* (Columbus, 1979), 154, n. 20.

¹¹⁴ Teter, *Texas Jewish Burials*.

¹¹⁵ *Jewish Monitor*, May 14, 1919.

¹¹⁶ "Local Items," *Jewish Monitor*, August 27, 1915.

¹¹⁷ "Contributors to the Local Relief Committee," *Jewish Monitor*, August 20, 1915.

¹¹⁸ *Jewish Monitor*, May 14, 1919 (Nathan Fox), September 10, 1915 (Kruger), May 14 and June 2, 1920 (Resnick).

¹¹⁹ "Stories About Our Soldier Boys in Camp and Abroad," *Jewish Monitor*, April 25, 1919.

¹²⁰ *Jewish Monitor*, July 1, 1915.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, July 29, 1915.

¹²² Simon to IRO, August 16, 1910, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection; *Fort Worth City Directory 1920*; burial records, Ahavath Sholom, Fort Worth.

¹²³ "Myer was one of the richest men in town until the Depression," according to his great niece. Meyerson interview.

¹²⁴ Zale interview; M. B. & Edna Zale Foundation, 1999 Annual Report; Stringer, *Zale Corporation . . . from the beginning*, 7-15, 61-62; University of Texas Institute for Texan Cultures, *The Jewish Texans*, 20-21; Ormish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 166-168.

¹²⁵ Simon remained a high-profile civic figure until 1941 when he and his law partner were accused of misappropriating money from the Texas Christian University trust fund, which they helped administer. Simon was found guilty in a civil court trial, fined, and suspended from the bar for one year. "Simon, U. M." envelope and "Mary Coutts Burnett Trust Case" envelope, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 8, 1941-June 27, 1945, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection*, Special Collections, University of Texas at Arlington. Once Simon's law license was reissued, he helped out in his sons' law office, quietly continued his volunteer work, and rarely stepped inside the courthouse. Frances Weltman interview conducted by Hollace Ava Weiner, October 15, 2000. Descendants acknowledge that there were violations of fiduciary trust. They assign much of the blame to Simon's senior law partner, W. H. Slay, who was also found guilty and who had helped create the university's Mary Coutts Burnett Trust. Henry Simon interview.

¹²⁶ *Jewish Monitor*, September 10, 1915. The American Jewish Relief Committee was one of the groups that merged into the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

¹²⁷ *Jewish Monitor*, September 10, 1915.

¹²⁸ Short on funds, the IRO asked Simon to "kindly refund to us, at your earliest convenience, forty eight cents, our outlay in the matter." He sent a forty-eight-cent money order along with a note: "I thank you for your kind interest and attention to this matter, and wish to assure you it is appreciated very much." IRO to Simon, October 18, 28, 1915; Simon to IRO, November 5, 1915, Box 64, Fort Worth folder, IRO Collection.

¹²⁹ "Auxiliary Due to Mark Date," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, November 26, 1965; *Congregation Ahavath Sholom, 5741-1980*, (Fort Worth, 1980) 52. The city's Jewish federation began in the mid-1930s.

¹³⁰ Observation based on conversations with Fort Worth historian Dr. Richard F. Selcer, author of *Hell's Half Acre: The Life and Legend of a Red-Light District* (Fort Worth, 1991).

¹³¹ *Jewish Monitor*, May 6, 1915.

¹³² "History of B'nai B'rith," Max Kaye Scrapbook, No. 2, 51, Ahavath Sholom Library, Fort Worth.

¹³³ A *Jewish Monitor* (May 6, 1915) editorial stated, "We commend Commissioner Hurdleston for his humanness. . . . These men and their families need to live at the present. We

hope that the Commissioner will continue to use good judgment in cases where the lives and welfare of many are concerned. Men need friends at all times, and the men who have friends are those who have earned them. Those who have been benefited by Commissioner Hurdleston's withdrawal of the order will not forget him."

¹³⁴ Report of Executive Committee 1910, Table No. 7; Report of Executive Committee of IRO, 1913, Table No. 9, Box 1, folder 5, IRO Collection.

¹³⁵ Glazier, *Dispersing the Ghetto*, 199.