

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CJB), 8/3/91, revised 8/23/91

Official Texas Historical Medallion and Plate without post, for brick  
Harris County (Job #03691)

Location: corner of Commerce and Sterling, Baytown

K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE\*

IN RESPONSE TO AREA POPULATION  
GROWTH FOLLOWING THE EARLY 20TH  
CENTURY GOOSE CREEK OIL FIELD  
BOOM, TWENTY INCORPORATING MEM-  
BERS FORMED THE K'NESSETH ISRAEL  
CONGREGATION IN 1928 TO SERVE THE  
AREA'S JEWISH RESIDENTS. THEY HIRED  
HOUSTON ARCHITECT LEONARD GABERT  
TO DESIGN THIS SYNAGOGUE, WHICH  
WAS COMPLETED IN 1930. OUTSTANDING  
FEATURES OF THE STRUCTURE INCLUDE  
ITS BARREL VAULT ROOF, ROUND-HEADED  
STAINED GLASS WINDOWS, AND ARCHED  
BRICKWORK ENTRY. \*\*

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1991\*\*\*

\*3/8 inch lettering to contrast with text

\*\*3/8 inch lettering

\*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

## APPLICATION FORM FOR OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

Texas Historical Commission

State Marker Program

P.O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711

RECEIVED  
OCT 01 1990  
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Title of Marker (subject to revision by THC staff) <b>Congregation K'nesseth Israel</b> <b>Synagogue</b>		County <b>Harris</b>	
Marker Location (street address and town, or specific directions from nearest town on state highway map) <b>Corner of Commerce and Sterling Streets</b> <b>Baytown, Texas</b>		<b>03691</b>	
Distance and direction of subject from marker site <b>N/A</b>	If not on post, type of surface to which marker will be attached (wood, stone, etc.) <b>Brick building</b>		
Owner of Marker Site <b>Congregation K'nesseth Israel</b>	Address <b>P.O. Box 702 Baytown, TX 77522</b>		
Sponsor of Marker <b>Mervin Rosenbaum, President</b>	Address <b>423 Willow Lane Baytown, TX 77520</b>		
Signature of County Chairman <b>Al Davis</b>	Address <b>929 WAXMYRTLE</b>	City, Zip <b>HOUSTON 77079</b>	Date <b>9/22/90</b>
Person to whom marker is to be shipped* <b>Mervin Rosenbaum</b>	Address <b>423 Willow Lane</b>	City, Zip <b>Baytown, TX 77520</b>	Telephone (required) <b>713 424-8765</b>

\*If marker is to be placed on highway right-of-way, it will be shipped to your district highway engineer.

Please consult the back of this page for specifications of the markers available. Check the items desired below. Approval of the application and narrative *must* be obtained from the county historical commission, as indicated by the county chairman's signature on this form, before forwarding the material to the Texas Historical Commission. Please *do not* send payment if ordering subject or building markers; funds will be requested once the application has been approved by the State Marker Committee. Sales tax must be added to the price, except if purchased by a tax-exempt organization. Applicants may order a marker with a socket to attach to their own post; however, the cost is the same as a marker furnished with a foundry post.

## SUBJECT MARKERS

- ☐ 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) ..... \$225  
☐ 27" x 42" subject marker with post ..... \$650  
☐ 27" x 42" subject marker without post ..... \$600  
☐ 18" x 28" subject marker with post ..... \$375  
☐ 18" x 28" subject marker without post ..... \$300

- ☐ I(We) request that RTHL designation be considered for this structure.  
 (Please see signature line below.)

## BUILDING MARKERS

- ☐ 16" x 12" building marker with post ..... \$350  
☒ 16" x 12" building marker without post ..... \$300

Applications for building markers will automatically be considered for the RTHL designation. Please read carefully Texas Marker Policies 13 through 18, and indicate that you have done so by signing below.

**Mervin Rosenbaum - President**  
**of Congregation**  
 Signature of owner

## PAPERWEIGHTS

Please indicate quantity desired.

- 1** 3" x 4" plastic paperweight  
 mounted with replica of marker **Harris Co.  
 Historical Com.** ..... \$90  
*Allow two months from completion of marker  
 for receipt of paperweight.*

- Medallion paperweight ..... \$40  
*Allows four lines of engraving; please indicate desired wording.*

## DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

Please indicate quantity desired and give location(s) on form above:

- 24" x 24" Historical Markers In City sign ..... \$80  
*These will be shipped to and placed on your town's city  
 limits signs by the District Highway Engineer.*

- Black and White (for farm-to-market roads, state and U.S. highways)  
 — Green and White (for Interstate highways)

- 18" x 22" Historical Marker directional sign ..... \$80  
*In black and white only. For city and county roads.  
 Applicant must supply post and be responsible for placement.*

- With arrow pointing straight ahead  
 — With arrow pointing left  
 — With arrow pointing right

## OTHER

- ☐ 12" x 6" supplemental plate ..... \$110  
☐ 16" x 12" building marker plate only  
 (see policy #15) ..... \$190  
☐ Replacement medallion (see policy #15) ..... \$110  
☐ Bronze stars (for replacement on 1936  
 granite markers) ..... \$ 25  
☐ Bronze wreaths (for replacement on  
 1936 granite markers) ..... \$ 25  
☐ Bronze seals (for replacement on  
 1936 granite markers) ..... \$ 65  
☐ Bronze plates (for replacement on  
 1936 granite markers) ..... \$185  
☐ Certificates of appreciation ..... 50¢ each

## CONGREGATION K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

The Congregation K'neseth Israel Synagogue (Assembly of Israel) at the corner of Commerce and Sterling is 60 years old this year and is the oldest building in continuous use as a house of worship in Baytown.<sup>1,2</sup>

Unlike many of the older synagogues, K'neseth Israel is not of the Moorish or Classic style but is a simple rectangular all-brick building. However, the high exterior walls (25 feet) and the "barrel" type roof extending from the east and west walls provide a high, beautifully curved interior ceiling. This creates an inspirational atmosphere for worship. The original stained glass windows do not contain figures but are multicolored panes of glass adding to the atmosphere.

The history of the congregation began at the start of the Goose Creek oil field boom in 1917. The population in the area, now known as Baytown, was about 2,000 people who had come from all parts of the country seeking work in the oil fields during the boom. Of these, only two families were of the Jewish faith.<sup>3;4</sup>

By 1920, there had been considerable growth in the area, Goose Creek and Pelly had been incorporated, and

the Humble Refinery had begun operation. The Jewish population had expanded to about 12 families. Realizing the necessity for a place of worship, they rented a building and began holding services on Friday nights and Saturday mornings.<sup>5</sup>

In the late 1920's, the community continued to grow. In 1928, the congregation was incorporated for 50 years, and property was purchased from Sterling Properties, who developed Goose Creek, to erect a future synagogue. The incorporating members were as follows:<sup>6;7</sup>

Abe Aron	Sol Aron
E. Aron	Dave Aron
Mose Sumner	Joe Susnitsky
M. Wilkenfeld	H. Lerner
C. Trifon	S. Levin
J. Guberman	A. Grenader
J. Feinberg	H. Kaplan
E. Hochman	Joe Moskowitz
A. Lensky	J. Sampson
P. Goldfield	Ira Guberman

Consideration then began to erect the synagogue. Some members opposed the plan, but the majority voted to launch a building campaign, and \$5,000 was pledged.

Mr. Leonard Gabert of Houston was hired as the architect. Blueprints were received and bids were sought. These bids were around \$18,000. Some members again opposed proceeding on the basis that the community was not stable. Others stressed that the area was growing, that the interurban electric railroad line to Houston had been completed, and that the future was bright. They prevailed, and the decision was made to proceed.<sup>8</sup>

Next came the problem of securing the necessary money. Only \$5,000 of the necessary \$18,000 was on hand. Several finance companies refused to make the loan, believing it would be a bad investment. Finally, on September 30, 1930, the American National Insurance Company of Galveston granted a loan and work was started with Mr. C. I. Fortinberry as the contractor. The building was completed late in 1930, and in a meeting, the congregation expressed thanks to God that they had the foresight to build such a splendid place of worship.<sup>9</sup>

There have been many weddings and Bar Mitzvahs conducted over the years. The first wedding was that of Miss Ruth Aron and Dr. Harry Kessler on January 19, 1931, shortly after building completion.<sup>10</sup>

Several other major events include the burning of the mortgage in 1943 and the rededication on May 6, 1979. This latter event celebrated the first 50 years of the congregation (not the building) and the

amending of the Articles of Incorporation to extend them in perpetuity. Over 140 members, former members, and the children and grandchildren of former members attended. Some came from as far away as Connecticut and Florida. Those taking part in the celebration first attended a brunch where many who had not seen one another for as long as 40 years renewed acquaintances. A special service followed in which Rabbi James Kessler of Galveston, a grandson of one of the founders, gave the sermon. He stressed that the history of the congregation and its current strength, despite the dwindling Jewish population in Baytown, was typical of the tenacity of Jewish religious faith through the ages. Another speaker was Michael Bleyzer, the newest member at the time, who had recently been allowed to leave Russia. He stated how wonderful it was to be in Baytown, Texas and to be able to participate in such a ceremony.<sup>11</sup>

In 1989, the synagogue was one of the featured buildings on the annual Bay Area Heritage Society home tour and visited by hundreds of Baytownians.

The size of the congregation has varied over the years, reaching a peak of 47 families in 1947.<sup>12</sup> The current membership is 21 families. There were five

rabbis during the years from 1930-1953. Since that time, the dwindling size of the congregation has not provided enough resources to support a rabbi. Religious services were conducted by lay members. Up until a decade ago, rabbis or knowledgeable laymen from other areas were often hired to conduct the high holy day services of Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. In the past 10 years, local members have conducted all the services. They are currently held on the first Friday of each month and on every religious holy day.

The only significant change made to the building since its erection has been the installation of central air conditioning.

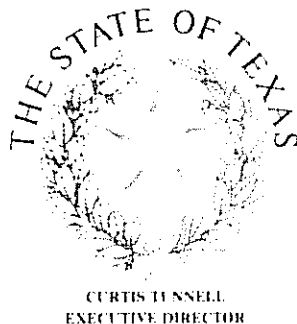
## NOTES:

- 1 Tri City-Goose Creek, Baytown and Pelly, Texas  
City Directory 1929-30
- 2 Reverend Burnette W. Dowler, head of the Baytown  
Ministerial Alliance, verbal communication to Mervin  
Rosenbaum on May 15, 1990 provided confirmation
- 3 "Congregation K'nesseth Israel Burns Mortgage"  
Goose Creek Texas Daily Sun, January 4, 1944, p.5
- 4 Oral tradition--names unknown
- 5 "Congregation K'nesseth Israel Burns Mortgage", op. cit.
- 6 Articles of Incorporation, Congregation K'nesseth  
Israel, November 3, 1928
- 7 Harris County Deed Records, Volume 841, p. 675
- 8 "Congregation K'nesseth Israel Burns Mortgage", op. cit.
- 9 Ibid
- 10 "Dinner Dance Follows Rite at Synagogue", Goose  
Creek Daily Tribune, January 19, 1931, p.1
- 11 "140 Attend K'nesseth Israel's 50th Anniversary  
Fete Here", Baytown Sun, May 14, 1979, p.3A
- 12 Program, Commemoration of 50th Anniversary and  
Rededication, Congregation K'nesseth Israel

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Articles of Incorporation, Congregation K'nesseth Israel,  
November 3, 1928
- "Congregation K'nesseth Israel Burns Mortgage", Goose  
Creek Texas Daily Sun, January 4, 1944:5
- "Dinner Dance Follows Rite at Synagogue" Goose Creek  
Daily Tribune, January 19, 1931:1
- Harris County Deed Records, Office of the County Clerk,  
Houston, Texas
- Henson, Margaret S. The History of Baytown Bay Area  
Heritage Society, 1986
- "One Hundred Forty Attend K'nesseth Israel's 50th  
Anniversary Fete Here", Baytown Sun, May 14, 1979:3A
- Oral Tradition--names unknown
- Program, Commemoration of 50th Anniversary and Rededication,  
Congregation K'nesseth Israel
- Reverend Burnette W. Dowler, head of the Baytown Ministerial  
Alliance - Verbal Communication to Mervin Rosenbaum
- Tri-City - Goose Creek, Baytown and Pelly, Texas City  
Directory 1929-30





# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

December 5, 1991

Al Davis, Chair  
Harris County Historical Commission  
929 Waxmyrtle  
Houston, TX 77079

RE: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
Medallion and Plate w/o post  
Job#: 03691; Date shipped: 11/27/91; Shipping company: UPS

Dear Mr. Davis:

We are writing to let you know that this marker was shipped to: Mervin Rosenbaum, 423 Willow Lane, Baytown, TX 77520, on the above-referenced date. If it has not been received, please contact Sylvia at the Southwell Company at 512/223-1831 so that it may be traced. (Please be prepared to give her the job number, date shipped, and shipping company name.)

Now would be a good time to set the date of the marker dedication. (A guide to planning a dedication ceremony is available from our office upon request). Because this is a state program, we recommend that your state senator and representatives, as well as the county judge and commissioners who appoint your county historical commission, be invited. Enclosed is a form for announcing the dedication in the THC's monthly newsletter, The Medallion, once details have been finalized.

We also would appreciate having photocopies of any newspaper clippings (rather than the original clippings, which aren't archivally stable) or photos about the dedication ceremony to complete our file on this marker.

Thank you for your continued support and good work toward the preservation of the history of our state.

Sincerely,

Frances Rickard, Director  
Local History Programs

pc: Congregation K'nesseth Israel  
Mervin Rosenbaum

Local History Programs  
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
P. O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711  
512/463-6100

September 16 , 1991

Mr. Bill Southwell  
The Southwell Company  
P. O. Box 299  
San Antonio, TX 78291

RE: Job No.: 03691  
County: Harris  
Title: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

Dear Mr. Southwell:

The Texas Historical Commission wishes to place an order with you for the following items:

- o 12"x6" Supplemental plate for job # for attachment to
- o 16"x12" Interpretive Plate for attachment to
- o 16"x12" Grave Marker
- o 18"x28" Subject marker with post
- o 18"x28" Subject marker without post for attachment to
- o 27"x42" Subject marker with post
- o 27"x42" Subject marker without post for attachment to
- o Medallion No. and 16"x12" plate with post
- ☒ Medallion No. 2578 and 16"x12" plate w/o post for attachment to brick.
- o 15"x10" Bronze National Register Plaque for attachment to
- o 1 Aluminum National Register Plaque for attachment to
- o Plastic Paperweight Replica of Job No. , County
- o Medallion Paperweight
- o 24"x24" Historical Markers in City Signs (black and white)
- o 24"x24" Historical Markers in City Signs (green and white)
- o Other:

Please provide us with a rubbing of the inscription as appropriate.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this order.

Sincerely,

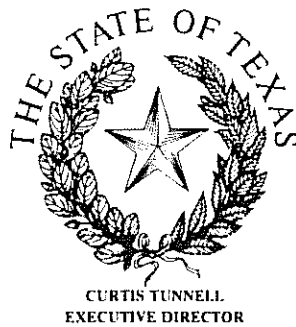


Eglina G. Kaase  
Local History Programs

SHIPPING INFORMATION

Mervin Rosenbaum  
423 Willow Lane  
Baytown, TX 77520  
713/424-8765

INCISING INFORMATION



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

September 16, 1991

Mr. Al Davis, Chair  
Harris County Historical Commission  
929 Waxmyrtle  
Houston, TX 77079

RE: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
Medallion and Plate, w/o post for brick  
Shipped to: Mervin Rosenbaum, 423 Willow Lane, Baytown, TX 77520, 713/424-8765

Dear Mr. Davis:

I am writing to inform you that we have ordered the above-referenced marker for casting. The completed marker should be ready for shipment within 10 weeks. A copy of the final inscription as it was sent to the foundry is enclosed for your files.

According to our records, the marker should be shipped to the address above. If these instructions have changed during the marker process, please let me know as soon as possible so that I may notify the foundry.

If you have not already done so, this would be a good time to begin planning the marker dedication ceremony. (A guide to planning a dedication ceremony is available from our office upon request.) Since this is a state program, we suggest that your state senator and/or representative be included in the program, as well as your county judge and commissioners who have appointed your county historical commission.

Please avoid setting the dedication date until the marker is received. The estimated shipping date above does not take potential shipping problems or other unforeseen delays into account, and the best laid dedication plans could be upset if planned around this time estimate. We will notify you and all parties listed below once the marker has been shipped from the foundry, and at that time we will also send all parties a form for announcing the dedication in the preservation calendar of the THC's monthly newsletter, The Medallion.

Again, please let me know if there has been a change in the shipping address, or if you would like a marker dedication guide.

Sincerely,

Egina G. Kaase  
Local History Programs

pc: Congregation K'neseth Israel  
Mervin Rosenbaum

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

\_\_\_\_\_ HARRIS \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY

I approve the inscription for K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

as sent to me on 8/28/91

Merwin Rosenbaum signature

Pres. Cong. K'neseth Israel organization

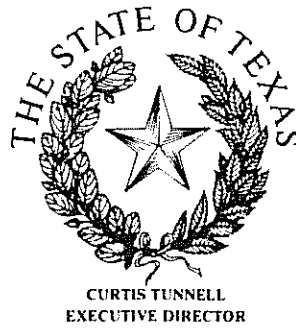
9/2/91 date

Have you checked with other parties involved to make sure all the  
necessary cards are mailed in?

*yes*

RECEIVED  
SEP 05 1991

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

August 28, 1991

Mervin Rosenbaum  
423 Willow Lane  
Baytown, TX 77520

RE: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
Medallion and plate w/o post, for brick  
Inscription Revision

Dear Mr. Rosenbaum:

Enclosed please find the revised inscription for the above-referenced historical marker. We have tried to incorporate most of the changes that were suggested to us, but we did have various style and spacing requirements to consider.

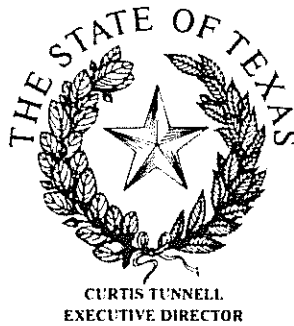
If you approve of the inscription, please sign and return the enclosed card. If not, please let us know and we will work on it further with you. Again, in order to avoid any unnecessary delays, please consult with all parties listed below before returning your card or submitting any suggested revisions.

The marker will be ordered when a version is approved by all parties. Thank you for your recommendations. I hope this version meets with your approval.

Sincerely,

Cynthia J. Beeman, Historian  
Local History Programs (State Marker Program)

pc: Al Davis  
Congregation K'nesseth Israel



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

August 8, 1991

Al Davis, Chair  
Harris County Historical Commission  
929 Waxmyrtle  
Houston, TX 77079

RE: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
Medallion and Plate w/o post, for brick  
Proposed inscription

Dear Mr. Davis:

Enclosed is the proposed inscription for the above-referenced marker. (Please note that this is a working copy, including filing and foundry instructions. The right-hand margin, which is uneven in this copy, will be justified on the finished marker.)

Please review and verify the information contained in the inscription. In particular, be sure to check all names and dates, and make certain we have noted the correct marker location. Please contact other sponsors of this application to discuss the wording of this marker. If you approve of the inscription, sign and return your own card. You may retain this inscription for your files.

If you have corrections to make or changes to suggest, please make a copy of the inscription and return it to me with the marked corrections. Please do not type a new version of the inscription; we have style and spacing requirements to consider, and require documentation of any changes (particularly of names and dates) in this draft for our permanent file.

The marker will not be ordered for casting until the county historical commission and other persons or groups listed below have approved the inscription. Again, in order to avoid any unnecessary delays, I encourage you to consult with all parties to determine that all are in accord before returning your card or submitting any suggested changes.

Sincerely,

Cynthia J. Beeman, Historian  
Local History Programs (State Marker Program)

pc: Congregation K'nesseth Israel  
Mervin Rosenbaum

EVALUATION FORM

Title: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
Address: Corner of Commerce and Sterling  
City: Baytown  
County: Harris  
Size: B, without post for brick  
Code: CH  
RTHL: yes  
Year: 91  
Job No.: 03691

Architectural Evaluation: An interesting example of the transition between 1920s historicism and geometric detailing more typical of the 1930s, this synagogue retains a high level of integrity. Its barrel vault roof form is mirrored by the round-headed windows and simple arched brickwork at the entry. Occuli above the windows accentuate the rhythm of design. Significant alterations are not apparent. Recommended for RTHL designation.

<sup>20</sup>  
Historical Evaluation: The K'neseth Israel congregation was organized in 1928 with ~~11~~ incorporating members. The need for a Jewish congregation in Baytown came about with a major population increase in the community due to the 1920s oil boom. Membership peaked in 1947, and since 1953 the congregation has not had a permanent rabbi, but lay leadership continues to keep the congregation active. This building was designed by Leonard Gabert of Houston and completed in 1930. The marker is proposed for placement on the building.

Staff recommendation: Medallion and plate

Staff evaluation by: Frances Rickard (historical) *FR*  
Bruce Jensen, Amy Dase (architectural)

State Marker Committee recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

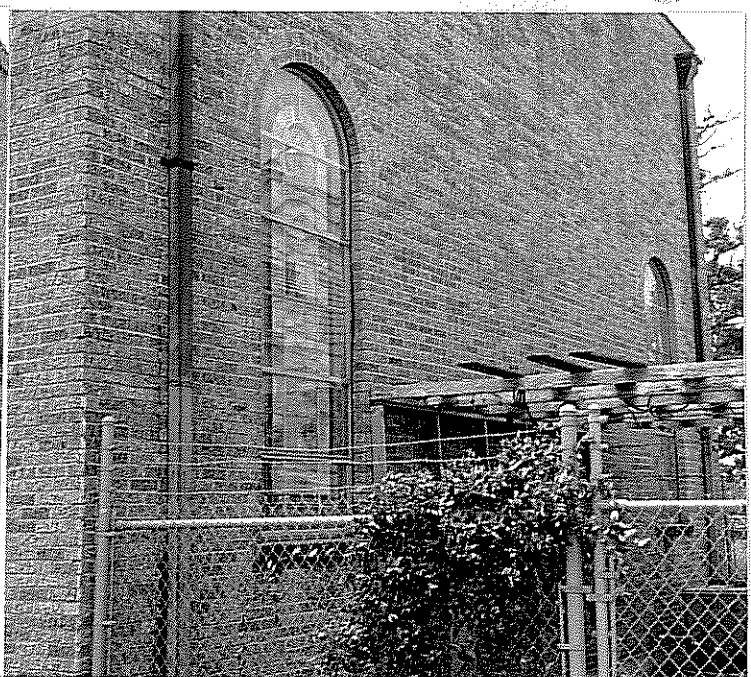
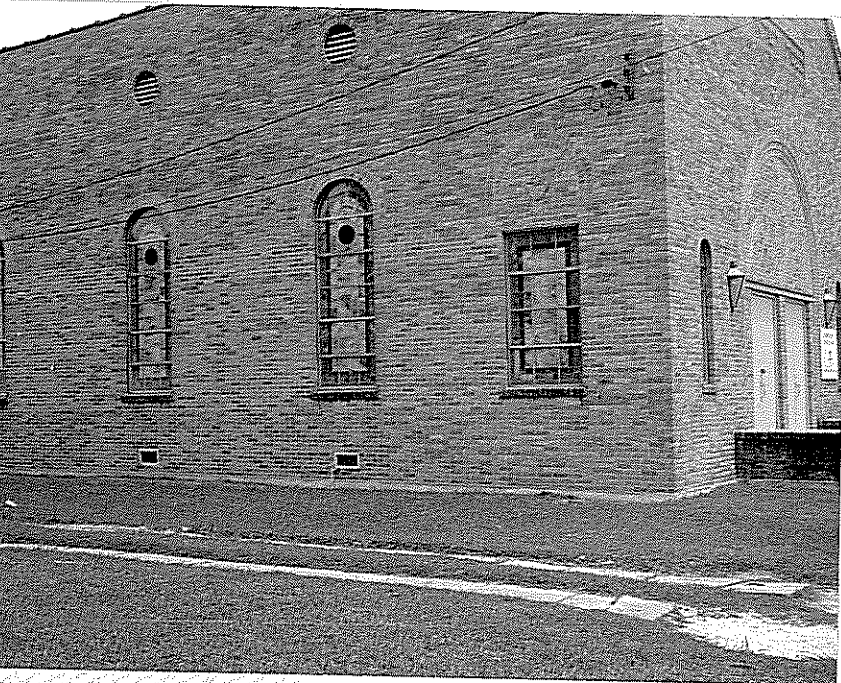
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State Marker Program  
Texas Historical Commission  
P.O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711  
512/463-6100



Front, East Side, West  
Side, and Back Views  
Respectively  
(See Back For Interior)





# Synagogue, Signifying Cancellation Of Debt

## Membership Of Group Grew With i-Cities Area

Recent burning of the mortgage on Congregation K'Nesseth Israel's synagogue here marked the milestone in the progress of the organization and of the community.

The mortgage was burned in a special service on Sunday, Dec. 1, and marked clearing of the debt of the congregation.

By Jerome Marx of New Orleans was guest speaker of the service and was introduced by President Moses Sanner, who stressed the importance of the center of the Jewish population of the community. He expressed hope for continued progress.

**Large Burned**

Secretary and Treasurer, Jacob B. Danziger, thanked the congregation for the privilege of being able to set fire to the mortgage and told the members that pledges of several years ago made the celebration possible.

Vice-President Sam Davis expressed tireless support to the congregation.

Rabbi B. Danziger conducted the service and Hertzell Abramson led the Chanukah lights. Y. Benel led the congregation in singing the Hallel and Bless America.

The conclusion of the service was the singing of the women of the congregation and lunch.

**With Community**

The history of Congregation K'Nesseth Israel is closely intertwined with the story of the Tri-Cities. The birth of both occurred in 1917 during the first world war," recalled Secretary.

The population of what was then called the Tri-Cities was at that time a scant 2000, who had come from all parts of the country seeking work in the oil fields. During the boom there were housing facilities here then running water, no schools, no electric lights or electricity.

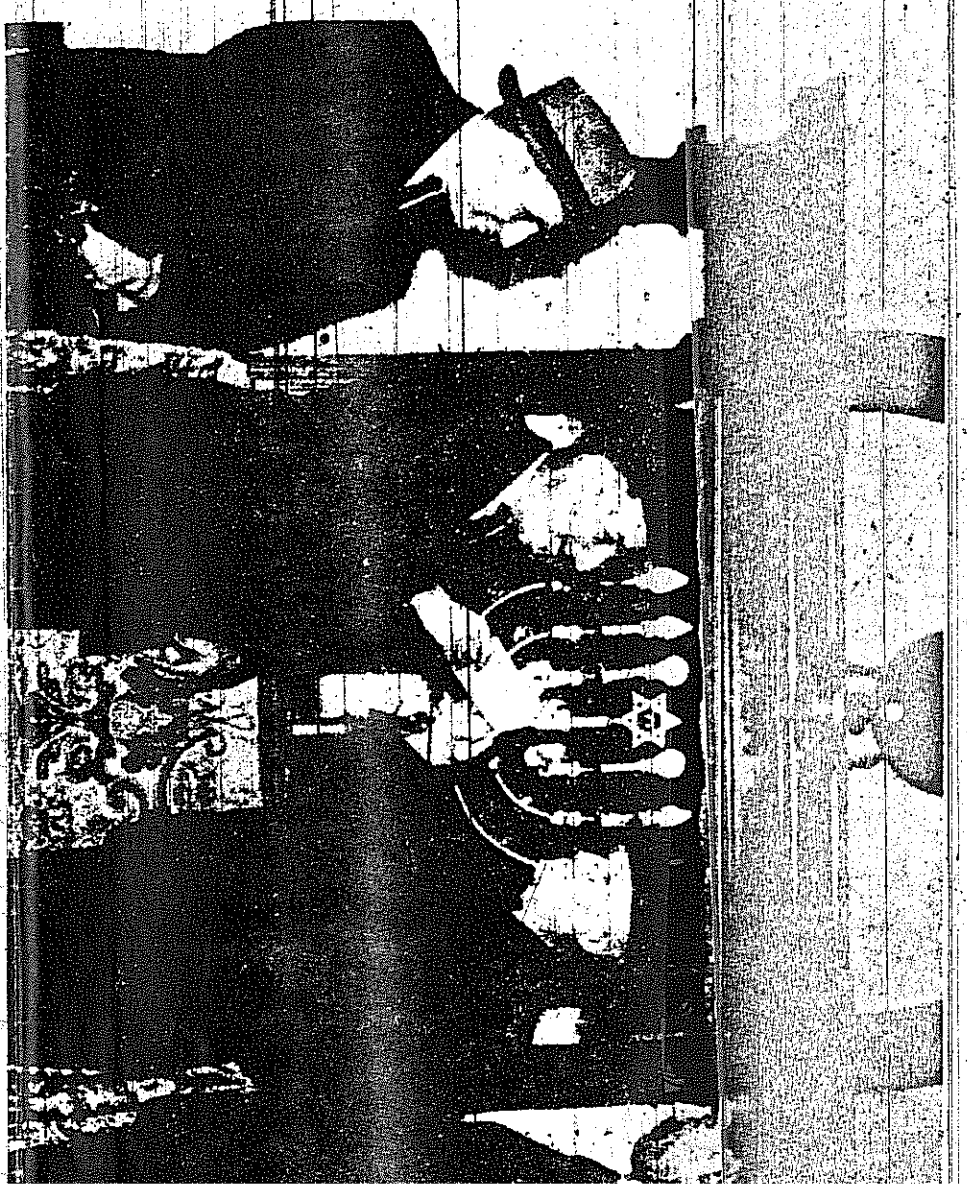
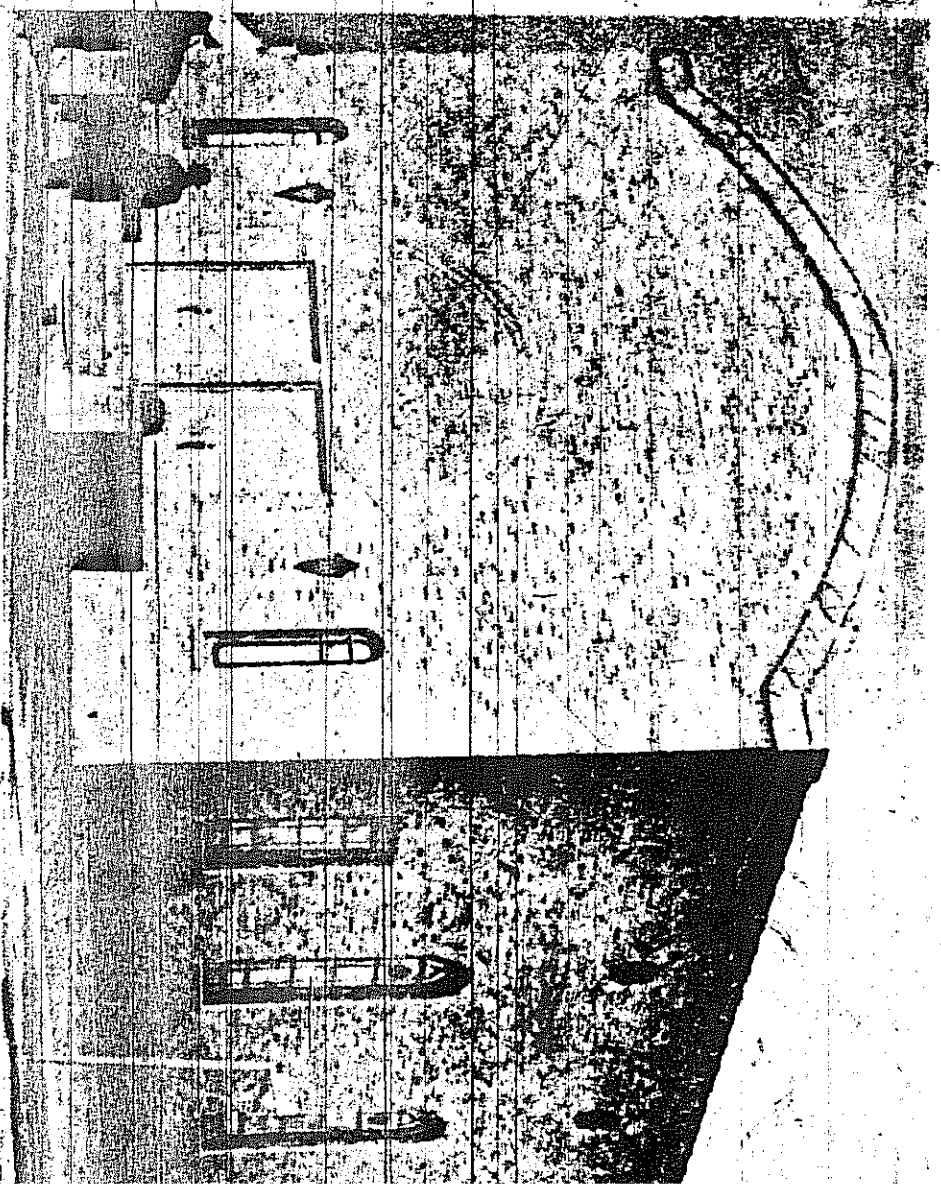
As is always the case, the people migrating to this community were of all religions, but there were only about 100 Jewish families of the Jewish faith.

**Talked**

During the talk, Christian ministers came and talked down to the task facing them. Soon they were preaching to large congregations, mostly in open-air assemblies.

In 1920 there had been a sideswipe growth, dry goods, grocery, drug and other stores opened and the Jewish population had expanded to about 100 families. These, realizing the necessity for a place of worship, decided a building from Sol Aroa began holding regular services on Friday nights and Sabbath mornings, their Sabbath.

The Gray was secured as the building. The congregation held a meeting to discuss the possibility of building a synagogue. Some time had not yet arrived for a step, but in the end the



**PRESIDENT MOSE SANNER** holds the mortgage on K'Nesseth Israel synagogue above and Secretary and Treasurer J. Guberman applies the match. At left is Vice-President Sam Davis and

building campaign and \$5000 was pledged in the meeting.

**Bids Are Received**

"Finally blue prints were received on the proposed building and bids were sought. These bids all were around \$18,000 and again some of the leaders opposed the undertaking on the basis that the population here was not stable.

"Those who favored going ahead with the plan pointed out that a railroad then was under construction.

Next came the problem of securing the necessary money. Only \$5000 of the necessary \$18,000 was in hand. Several finance companies refused to make a loan, believing it would be a bad investment.

**Loan Is Secured**

Finally on Sept. 30, 1930, the American National Insurance company of Galveston made a loan of \$10,000 and work was started.

# EVALUATION FORM

Title: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
 Address: Corner of Commerce and Sterling  
 City: Baytown  
 County: Harris  
 Size: B, without post for brick  
 Code: CH  
 RTHL: yes  
 Year: 91  
 Job No.: 03691

Architectural Evaluation: An interesting example of the transition between 1920s historicism and geometric detailing more typical of the 1930s, this synagogue retains a high level of integrity. Its barrel vault roof form is mirrored by the round-headed windows and simple arched brickwork at the entry. Occuli above the windows accentuate the rhythm of design. Significant alterations are not apparent. Recommended for RTHL designation.

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Staff recommendation: Medallion and plate *ad*  
Staff evaluation by: Frances Rickard (historical) *FR*  
 Bruce Jensen, Amy Dase (architectural)

State Marker Committee recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

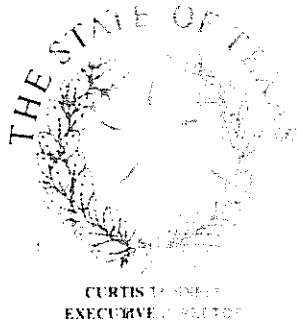
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

IN the past, I have not  
 reviewed applications in  
 Harris County. I'll be pleased  
 to approve this one, but  
 thought it might have been  
 included when it should have  
 gone to other team. *Al*

sion



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

June 6, 1991

Mervin Rosenbaum  
723 Willow Lane  
Baytown, TX 77520

RE: K'NESSETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE  
Corner of Commerce and Sterling, Baytown  
Medallion and 16" x 12" plate w/o post  
Job #: 03691

Dear Mr. Rosenbaum:

This letter is to notify you that the State Marker Committee has reviewed and approved the above-referenced structure for the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RIHL) designation. This special status, awarded to properties deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations, conveys a measure of legal protection to the building. Notification of any modifications to the exterior of this structure should be made to the Texas Historical Commission at least 60 days prior to the commencement of work. Please refer to the enclosed brochure for further information on the RIHL designation.

At this time payment for the marker is due. A check in the amount of \$300.00\* should be made payable to the Texas Historical Commission and sent to the letterhead address as soon as possible. Once payment is received, the application will be placed in line to have the marker inscription written. The inscription will not be prepared until after funds have been received. When the text is written, a copy will be sent to you and any parties listed below for review.

The Texas Historical Commission wishes to congratulate you on the preservation of this fine structure and appreciates your effort to record Texas history in this manner.

Sincerely,

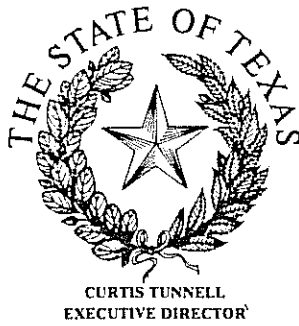
*Frances Rickard*  
Frances Rickard, Director  
State Marker Program

FR/ap

\*A recent ruling by the State Comptroller's Office determined that state historical markers, because of their educational nature, are not subject to state sales tax. On 4/11/91, the THC stopped collecting sales tax on state markers.

pc: Al Davis, Harris County Historical Commission  
Congregation K'neseth Israel

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

P.O. BOX 12276

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

(512)463-6100

October 2, 1990

Al Davis  
929 Waxmyrtle  
Houston, TX 77079

RE: CONGREGATION K'NESSETH ISRAEL  
16"X12" building marker w/o post

Dear Mr. Davis:

This letter is to notify you that we have received the above referenced marker application.

The application first will be reviewed and evaluated by the Texas Historical Commission staff. Should additional information be needed, you will be contacted. After any deficiencies have been corrected, copies of the application will be sent to the members of the State Marker Committee, who will make the final determination of the topic's acceptability for marking.

You will be notified as soon as the committee makes its decision. If the topic is approved for marking, we will request payment at the time of notification. If not approved, the application will be returned along with a letter of explanation.

Because of the variables involved in the marker process and because we must coordinate our orders with the schedule of the contracting foundry, we would ask that the dedication date not be set until you have received notice that the marker has been shipped.

We appreciate your interest in preserving the history of Texas.

Sincerely,

Frances Rickard, Director  
State Marker Program

FR/bjb

cc: Congregation K'nesseth Israel  
Mervin Rosenbaum

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*