

Texas Historical Commission Staff (MM), 6/18/79

Official Texas Historical Building Marker for attachment to wood  
Harrison County (Order #5525)

Location: 313 South Washington St., Marshall

WEISMAN-HIRSCH HOUSE\*

BEFORE DEPARTMENT STORE OWNER  
JOE WEISMAN(1848-1918)MARRIED LENA  
YOUNG IN 1881,HER FATHER DEEDED THIS  
PROPERTY TO WEISMAN•THE FIRST  
HOME BURNED AND THIS STRUCTURE  
WAS BUILT IN 1901•THE ARCHITECT  
WAS C.G.LANCASTER WHO ALSO  
DESIGNED THE GINOCCHIO HOTEL•LATER  
THE WEISMANS' DAUGHTER VALRIE  
AND HER HUSBAND JOE NATHAN HIRSCH  
(1883-1966)OCCUPIED THE HOUSE•THE  
WEISMAN-HIRSCH RESIDENCE WAS A  
SOCIAL CENTER FOR JEWISH CITIZENS  
OF EAST TEXAS•\*\*  
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1979\*\*\*

\*1/2 inch lettering  
\*\*3/8 inch lettering  
\*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

APPROVED  
Truett Latimer

*by Anita Reed 8-29-79*

MARKER NAME

Weisman-Hirsch House

JOB#

5525

WN

Marshall

COUNTY

Harrison

DATE

2/27/79

Medallion 16" x 12" marker without post

\$125

MARKER SIZE

PRICE

PROCEDURE FOR MARKER APPLICATION

INITIAL	DATE	
AG	2/27/79	1. Application checked and dated
AG	2/27/79	2. Check deposited
HW	2-28-79	2a. Receipt of application acknowledged
DP	3-12-79, 4-11-79	3. Folder checked and approved
		4. Additional information sent for
G	4-26-79	4a. Sent to SMC for subject matter approval
HW	5-15-79	5. Letter of approval sent, permanent record and DSA recording, labeling, listed & filed in current marker work
MM	6-11-79	6. Checkout to inscription writer
Z	6-22-79	7. Sent for State Marker Committee approval
MM	8-8-79	8. Inscription submitted for County approval
		9. Highway permission secured (if necessary)
KG	8/24/79	10. Order sent to Southwell
DKU	10-10-79	11. Rubbing checked
		12. Stencil cut
MM	11-7	13. Recorded for Marker Guide
MM	11-14	14. News release sent, w/copy to THC President (Recorded Landmark Certificate sent, if necessary)
MM	11-17	15. Notice of shipment sent
DKA	12-12	16. Extraneous material deleted, folder given to architectural historian
DKA	12-12	17. Folder placed in completed marker file

Appl. rec'd: 2/27/79

Check No.: 2394

Check dated: 2/22/79

Amt. of check: \$125

Check signed by: Ralph Beil

MARKER TITLE Weisman-Hirsch House [An Historical Building JOB# 5525  
Medallion w/16"x 12" plate is wanted]  
CITY Marshall COUNTY Harrison  
DATE 2/27/79

EVALUATION OF  
APPLICATION FOR COMMEMORATIVE MARKER  
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE MARKER COMMITTEE:

Your appraisal of the attached dossier is hereby requested. To assist you in your deliberations, the comments and recommendations of the staff are included. If your own comments are extensive, you may attach other sheets, or write on the back of this one.

Please retain in your file all but this evaluation sheet, which we request that you return to the state office at your earliest convenience. If the majority of the State Marker Committee recommends acceptance, the inscription will be written and sent to you for your approval. At that time you may wish to refer to the history previously submitted.

Truett Latimer  
Executive Director

Architectural Evaluation:

A particularly good example of the Victorian house with a variety of forms and textural treatment adding to its significance. J. R. W., 4/12/79

Substantive Evaluation:

Here is an excellent opportunity to mark a merchant's house, as distinctive from a planter's house, in Marshall. The history is very strong in point of significance, particularly indicative of social change in East Texas. *George Parmelee, 4-12-79*

Administrative Evaluation:

*Recommend approval A Read 4-13-79*

RECOMMENDATION OF SMC MEMBER:

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

Signature, SMC Member

Date

5525

APPLICATION FORM FOR OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P. O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711

RECEIVED FEB 20 1979 TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

A written history, signed by the author, must accompany this form before it will be accepted.

Harrison County February 22, 1979
1. Weisman-Hirsch House
2. same
3. 313 South Washington Avenue
4. Marshall
5. NA
6. Dr. and Mrs. Gregory Beil 313 South Washington Avenue Marshall
7. Same Same Same
8. Max S. Roe 3704 Fitzgerald Marshall
9. Dr. and Mrs. Gregory Beil 313 South Washington Avenue Marshall
10. wood

ORDER FORM

Please consult page 7 for specifications of the markers available. Check the items desired below. Then mail this application and narrative history, together with a check made payable to the Texas Historical Foundation, to the address above. No applications will be accepted unless payment is included.

If marker application is cancelled after the inscription is written, the Texas Historical Foundation will deduct the cost of writing the inscription from the refund.

HISTORICAL MARKERS

- 27" x 42" subject marker with post \$475
27" x 42" subject marker without post \$435
18" x 28" subject marker with post \$250
18" x 28" subject marker without post \$220
16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) \$125
16" x 12" building marker with post \$150
16" x 12" building marker without post \$125
National Register plaque \$ 25

REPLACEMENT MARKERS

- Bronze plate \$300
Bronze seal \$245
Bronze wreath \$115
16" x 12" building plaque only \$ 75
14" medallion only \$ 50

HIGHWAY DIRECTIONAL SIGN

- 24" x 24" Historical Markers In City sign \$ 50
Black and white (for farm-to-market roads, state and U.S. highways)
Green and white (for interstate highways)

MARKER REPLICA PAPERWEIGHT

- This item should be ordered at the same time marker is ordered. Indicate quantity desired. Allow six months from completion of marker for receipt of paperweight.
3" x 4" plastic paperweight with replica of marker inside. \$ 50

## THE WEISMAN-HIRSCH HOME

by Gail Kimes Beil and Ralph Gregory Beil  
313 S. Washington, Marshall, Texas 75670

The Weisman-Hirsch home is located two blocks south of the town square of Marshall, Texas on a 1 acre tract of land which encompasses lots 3,4,5,6, and parts of 2 and 7 of Block 62 of the Original Town Site. The land was a part of the 1836 grant from the Republic of Texas to Peter Whetstone.

After numerous transactions, which are recorded in detail in Appendix A, the property was sold in April of 1881 to Abraham Young. Two months later Young sold one lot of the tract to Joe Weisman for "one dollar plus consideration." The next month, July 1881, Weisman married Young's daughter Lena, so the lot was probably a part of her dowery. Over the next 6 years, in three separate transactions, Young deeded the entire tract over to Weisman.

The first residence on the tract was built by Weisman in 1881, according to family sources. It was a one-story structure with a front porch supported by cement columns. Sections of several of these columns remain on the property and are used as garden accents by the present owners.

The first residence was totally destroyed by fire on November 17, 1898,<sup>1</sup> following which the present structure was built in 1901.

The property remained in the Weisman family for 91 years, passing, on the death of Joe Weisman in 1918, to his son-in-law, Joe Hirsch, and on his death in 1966, to the children of Joe Hirsch and Valrie Weisman Hirsch.

In June of 1972, the property was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Gregory Beil, the present owners.

Construction of the present structure was begun in November of 1900. According to a contemporary newspaper article:<sup>2</sup> "PALACIAL HOME. Contract Let For Joe Weisman's New Residence. The contract was let yesterday to Contractor Brinck, for the erection of a palacial home for Joe Weisman, on his lot on South Washington. It is to contain twelve rooms, and will be by far the handsomest residence in Marshall, if not East Texas."

Construction was completed in August of 1901. Another newspaper article<sup>3</sup> states that the Weisman family has moved into the home and gives a lengthy description.

Hobart Key<sup>4</sup> states that the specific motivation for erecting the structure, in addition to the obvious one of providing a home for the Weisman family, was to build Marshall's finest example of Late Victorian architecture. The intention of Joe Weisman, and the architect, C. G. Lancaster, was to construct the most elegant home in the area. Considering the presence in Marshall at that time of such well-known houses as the Starr home and the Lothrop home, this was a formidable undertaking. But, according to contemporary newspaper accounts,<sup>3</sup> the undertaking was judged to have succeeded.

Joe Weisman, who had the home built, was founder and owner of Joe Weisman and Company, until recently the largest department store in the area. He was also a prominent member of the Jewish community in East Texas.

Weisman's department store was founded in Marshall in 1878. It was first located on the north side of the town square, then in 1898 moved to the 200 block of North Washington, where it remains to this date. At the time the store was sold by the family in 1976, it was the oldest family-owned department store in Texas, having been in continuous operation by the Weisman-Hirsch family for 98 years.

Joe Weisman was born in Syracuse, N.Y. in 1848. He came to Marshall in 1866 and worked until 1878 as bookkeeper for L. Dreyfus, a local merchant. Three years after starting his own store he married Lena Young. The couple had three daughters, Hallette, Edith, and Valrie.

The Weismans were major supporters of the Moses Montefiore Temple in Marshall and were active in the social scene of Marshall. The following account appeared at the time:<sup>5</sup> "The brilliant business career of J. Weisman, who has led the way in the introduction of many improved business methods, has built up a mercantile business that would be a credit to any of the larger cities of the Union. Few people are better known or have more friends in Marshall, Harrison Co., and Texas, than Joe Weisman."

An editorial in the same paper in 1898 commends Joe Weisman as a "sterling example to all the young people in the City; and one of our finest citizens."

Newspaper articles<sup>6</sup> in December of 1899 describe a Jewish Fair held to raise money to build the new temple. Hostesses for the occasion were Mrs. Edmund Key and Mrs. B. F. Eads ( the two most socially prominent Gentile ladies of the town) and Mrs. Joe Weisman and her daughter Edith. The fair was strongly supported editorially and was reported to be an enourmous success.

Mrs. Weisman was also well-known in the area as a practitioner of homeopathic medicine. She learned this healing art, popular in that era, from a Dr. Peterman and, after considerable study, began dispensing homeopathic medicines to all segments of the community. The downstairs bathroom of the house still has an alcove with shelves where the medicine was stored. Family members say that the list of patients and their respective dosages was written on a wall there. They report that on certain days of the month there would be a long line of people at the house waiting to receive their treatment from "Dr. Lena." A number of the tiny bottles used for these medicines have been found on the property.

In 1910 the Weisman's daughter Valrie married Joe Nathan Hirsch.

Joe Hirsch was born in Louisiana on February 11, 1883. He came to Marshall in 1895 and soon began working as a stockboy with Joe Weisman's, earning ten dollars a month and sleeping in the loft of the store. He worked his way up in the business and, on the death of Joe Weisman, became general manager. He was active in numerous civic orgainizations, including 13 years on the Marshall Board of Education and terms as director of the Marshall Chamber of Commerce. He died on May 24, 1966.

Valrie Weisman Hirsch, born July 7, 1890, attended the University of Texas for two years prior to her marriage. In addition to raising four children, she was very active in the community in both public and private causes. She was president of the Sisterhood of Moses Montefiore for many years. Her strength of

conviction helped hold together the Sisterhood and the Temple congregation in latter years when Jewish citizens in the area declined in numbers. Her private charities were unknown even to her closest relatives, but family members relate that, at her funeral, in November of 1963, numbers of people came forward to tell how a gift from Mrs. Hirsch had helped them get through college, or helped a family after a fire, or helped to feed someone in dire need. Community leaders say that if any worthy cause or fund-raising drive fell short of its goal, Mrs. Hirsch could always be counted on to quietly make up the difference.

In the 1960's management of the store was taken over by Martin Hirsch, the older son, and on his death in September of 1968, by the younger son, Joe. The sons continued the family tradition of constructive activity in the community.

The architect for the structure was C. G. Lancaster. This is verified by a newspaper account<sup>2</sup> and was tangibly confirmed recently by the discovery of a 1" by 12" board under the house bearing the words, "C. G. Lancaster, Architect."

Mr. Lancaster was a well-known architect in the East Texas area. Among other significant buildings, he designed the Harrison County Courthouse, the Jewish Temple, the Martin home on South Washington in Marshall, and the Ginocchio Hotel.

The name of the contractor was a Mr. Brinck. Nothing else is known about him.

The structure was built in an adaptation of the Queen Anne style, with several gables and other "gingerbread." There are two tall, brick chimneys on the highly pitched roof. The house is roughly square, with three full stories; however only the lower two have ever been lived in. The original size of the house was approximately 5000 square feet of floor space in the inhabited area, making it probably the largest home in Marshall when it was built.

As reported at the time<sup>3</sup>: "A MODERN HOME. A Peep Inside A New Marshall Residence. The elegant new buildings, for whatever purpose erected, that adorn our very progressive city, are of real advantage to neighboring property, in that



they raise the price of real estate, and they are a standing token of the success of our prosperous people. Notable among our handsome new residences is the splendid mansion of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Weisman, into which they and their family have had the good fortune to move.

"The residence was built after the carefully executed plans of Mr. C. G. Lancaster, and is the house beautiful without and throughout. Modern, bordering on colonial, is the style of the house, and the handsome front porch has a novel feature called an 'open terrace' especially suited to our climate."

The floor plan of both stories is nearly indential, with a large, central hall, approximately 15 by 35 feet, flanked by two 18 by 18 rooms on each side. In addition to these ten rooms (counting the halls as rooms) there was a large bathroom and, on a wing extending back from the main structure, a butler's pantry, kitchen and "pastry room."

The large, columned porch extends two-thirds of the way across the front of the house. There were also two back porches off the rear of the house, one of which housed a cistern.

The structural timber in the house is all either cypress or heart of pine. The foundation is brick. The exterior construction is pine, including a section in the "fishscale" style.

The interior of the house is architecturally most noteworthy. There is a magnificent entrance alcove of oak, with large, beveled, leaded glass windows on three sides. The two huge front doors are ornately decorated with carved moldings, and also have large beveled glass panels. On each side of the front doors are seats upholstered in leather, and a marble mosaic covers the floor of the alcove.

The downstairs hallway is dominated by a massive, three-flight staircase of quarter-sawed oak. The entire hallway has thick, oak wainscotting, except for large, glass-doored bookcases on the wall opposite the stairway. The newel posts on the first landing of the stairway are adorned with two-foot bronze statues of Greek maidens holding aloft candlestick holders.

The floors throughout the main part of the first floor are oak, probably the first oak floors in Marshall.<sup>7</sup>

Each of the four large downstairs rooms has a carved oak mantel enclosing a beautiful ceramic tile fireplace. Each one is of a different design. The mantels in the living and dining rooms are eight feet tall and five feet wide. These fireplaces originally contained Baltimore wood heaters, which had a vent system to radiate heat into the upper rooms. They also had trap doors so the ashes could fall into the crawl space under the house. Only one of the heaters remains today.

The living room, or parlor, has a three foot by eight foot beveled, leaded glass window, topped by a Tiffany-style window approximately 1½ by three feet.

The ceilings in the downstairs rooms are 14 feet high, and the living room has plaster moldings around the ceiling.

The dining room has the same oak wainscoting as the front hall.

The original doors which connected the downstairs rooms were double, sliding panels of oak, each three by nine feet.

An interesting feature of each of the downstairs rooms is that short segments of the corners have been cut off, making the rooms actually octagonal instead of square. Four of these corners are occupied by the fireplaces, three by built-in closets, and the rest by windows. The family says that this was done because of an old Jewish tradition that the Devil hides in corners -- so in a room with no square corners, there would be nothing to fear.

There is a large bathroom at the rear of the downstairs bedroom, which contained what was described as "open plumbing."

The upstairs floors are pine. Of particular significance is the fact that the upstairs woodwork -- mop boards, door and window frames -- is of curly pine, the beautiful, swirl-grained pine which is now extinct. Mr. Hobart Key, who confirms the identification of this wood, states that the wood was available because Mr. Lancaster was using large quantities of it at the time in the construction of the Ginocchio Hotel.

One of the four large upstairs rooms, which was described as a "trunk room," has a closet containing four huge drawers as large as packing trunks, which were used for storing feather comforters. There is also a full-sized cedar closet in this room, one of two in the house.

Still another elegant feature of the house interior was the use of triple-hung, wooden shutters in all of the windows.

The house had electric lights which were "made complete by a careful system of switches so that at the entrance door a touch of the fingers gives complete control of all the light in the house."<sup>3</sup>

Outbuildings of the house at the time it was built consisted of a well-house, wood house, laundry, barn and a two-room servant's house. Only the servant's house remains today.

Few details are known concerning the construction of the house, which lasted from December 1900 to August 1901.

The mantles and other woodwork were said to have been brought in from the East Coast, and it is probable that the fireplace tiles were imported from Europe. Such items as the Tiffany window and the beveled glass windows are said to have been available on catalog order at the time.

It is obvious, on inspecting the house, that superior craftsmanship was used in all phases of its construction. There is much hand woodwork evident, which would be practically impossible to duplicate today. The September 1901 description of the house states: "Much of the fine interior work is handsome, and done right here in Marshall by our own people, Mr. Carr having done a great deal of it."

Of course, the curly pine wood is no longer available at any price and represents a major asset of the house.

The influences which caused Mr. Weisman to build a residence of this type can only be guessed at. Certainly, due to the prosperity of his business, money was no consideration, and no expense was spared in incorporation of the very finest in materials and craftsmanship.

Very few significant additions have been made to the house in succeeding years. About 1912 a large sleeping porch was built directly above the downstairs bathroom. The cistern porch was enclosed and an upstairs bathroom built above it.

In the 1920's, all but one of the downstairs sliding doors were replaced by hinged, wooden-framed, glass doors which are not only beautiful, but make the interior appear brighter and more open.

Six large ceiling fans were added in 1936. They were brought from Dallas by Dr. Leonard Rosengarten, who was soon to marry Frances, the younger Hirsch daughter.

Since being purchased by the Beil family in 1972 the house has been extensively renovated, including interior and exterior repainting, and a new roof. It is in an excellent state of repair and is structurally as sound as ever. Considerable work has been done in care and maintenance of the grounds, including the 45 prize-winning camellia bushes.

The Beil family is responsible for the upkeep of the home and plan to continue to use it as their primary residence for the foreseeable future.

The house was featured on the Stagecoach Days tour of the Harrison County Conservation Society in May of 1976.

The primary role of the structure in the community over the years has been as a family residence. During the Weisman-Hirsch years it was a major social center for the Jewish citizens of East Texas, as the families entertained frequently. This is evidenced by the following newspaper accounts from the year 1902:

January 3: "Mr. and Mrs. Joe Weisman Entertain. The palatial residence of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Weisman was the scene of one of the most brilliant social events of the season Wednesday evening."<sup>8</sup> The article describes the event in lavish detail.

November 14: "Brilliant Entertainment at the Handsome Weisman Home. The elegant residence of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Weisman is perfectly adapted for social functions on a sumptuous scale, and such was the splendid Whist party that they

gave last Thursday evening in which they entertained the entire Entre Nous Club in a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the organization of the Ladies Aid Society of the Moses Montefiore congregation."<sup>9</sup> Again, the occasion is depicted in extensive detail.

There are three main reasons for wanting to commemorate this structure:

1. The structure is a fine example of a Late Victorian Texas home, with an imposing and harmonious exterior and an interior of unusual elegance and beauty, including fireplaces, glasswork, woodwork, and the unique curly pine.
2. The architect, Mr. C. G. Lancaster, was the creator of numerous noteworthy and historic structures of that era.
3. The Weisman-Hirsch family was highly significant in the business and community life of Marshall, Texas, and in the Jewish society of East Texas.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Marshall Evening Messenger, November 18, 1898.
2. Marshall Messenger, November 23, 1900.
3. Marshall Evening Messenger, September 5, 1901.
4. Mr. Key is a descendant of an early Harrison County family, member of the county Historical Commission, and local historian of recognized authority.
5. Marshall Morning Star, May 1894.
6. Marshall Evening Messenger, various articles in December of 1899.
7. According to Gene Ford, long-time professional floor-finisher in the area.
8. Marshall Evening Messenger, January 3, 1902.
9. Marshall Evening Messenger, November 14, 1902.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Print Sources

1. Abstract of Property, Moseley Abstract Co., Marshall. (Includes Harrison County Deed and Probate Records).
2. The Marshall Morning Star
3. The Marshall Messenger and Evening Messenger
4. "Married" - Scrapbook of Ida Kate Holmes, 1881-1900, in Harrison County Museum Archives.

Oral Sources

1. Misses Della and Mae Marcus, Dallas, Texas.
2. Mr. Hobart Key, Marshall.
3. The Hirsch Children:  
Mrs. Mary Stern, Ontario, CA.  
Mrs. Frances Rosengarten, Los Angeles, CA.  
Mr. Joe Hirsch, Marshall.
4. Mrs. Audrey Kariel, Marshall.
5. Mr. Gene Ford, Jefferson, Texas.

APPENDIX A  
Record of Land Ownership

1. Republic of Texas to Peter Whetstone  
Patent, dated August 13, 1845, filed June 24, 1847  
Recorded in Vol. F., p. 160 of Harrison County Deed Records (Here in after abbreviated as HCDR)  
This is the official confirmation of the 1836 grant - 4605 acres - which included all of the original townsite of Marshall, Texas.
2. Report of Sale by Dicy Whetstone, Administratrix of the Estate of Peter Whetstone, deceased.  
Filed August 25, 1845  
Recorded in Vol. B, p. 98 of the Probate Records of Harrison County  
Various property of the Whetstone estate was sold in open auction on the steps of the Courthouse on the 1st Tuesday in July of 1845.  
Among the list of highest bidders for various parcels:  
C. M. Adams bought Block 62  
Chesley M. Adams was an early Harrison County attorney and rice farmer.
3. C. M. Adams to A. Sears  
Dated January 9, 1849, filed January 17, 1849  
Recorded in Vol. G, p. 132 of HCDR  
Block 62 sold for \$850.00
4. Alexander Sears to Ira Freeman  
Dated August 26, 1850, filed November 1, 1850  
Recorded in Vol. J, p. 121 of HCDR  
Block 62 sold for \$1000.00  
Ira M. Freeman was the first postmaster of Marshall.
5. I. M. Freeman to John W. Barnett  
Dated February 1, 1851, filed February 6, 1851  
Recorded in Vol. J, p. 308 of HCDR  
Block 62 sold for \$2100.00
6. J. W. Barnett et UX Louisa R. C. Barnett to Sally R. Griffin  
Dated April 29, 1856, filed May 15, 1856  
Recorded in Vol. P, p. 4 of HCDR  
Block 62 sold for \$1500.00



7. Sallie R. Griffin et VIR J. F. Griffin to Samuel Bludworth  
Dated October 17, 1859, filed October 25, 1859  
Recorded in Vol. R, p. 636  
Block 62 sold for unrecorded amount
8. Heirs of Samuel Bludworth to Georgie D. Weed  
Quit Claim Deeds:  
Georgie L. Bludworth,  
Dated October 10, 1878, filed December 28, 1880  
Recorded in Vol. 12, p. 282 of HCDR  
H. W. Bludworth,  
Dated January 27, 1879, filed December 28, 1880  
Recorded in Vol. 12, p. 283 of HCDR  
W. H. Thurman,  
Dated May 13, 1880, filed December 28, 1880  
Recorded in Vol. 12, p. 284 of HCDR
9. W. S. Weed et UX Georgie D. Weed to D. D. Brady  
Dated October 21, 1880, filed December 28, 1880  
Recorded in Vol. 12, p. 287 of HCDR
10. D. D. Brady to Albert Van Hook  
Dated October 21, 1880, filed December 28, 1880  
Recorded in Vol. 12, p. 287 of HCDR  
Block 62 sold for \$800.00  
In the above three transactions the heirs of Samuel Bludworth are selling the property to Van Hook.
11. Albert Van Hook et UX Katie Van Hook to Abraham Young  
Dated April 8, 1881, filed April 9, 1881  
Recorded in Vol. 13, p. 63 of HCDR  
The south part of Block 62, the present tract, consisting of lots 3,4,5,6, and the southern portion of lots 2 and 7, sold for \$1000.00.
12. Abraham Young to Joseph Weisman  
Dated June 25, 1881, filed July 25, 1881  
Recorded in Vol. 13, p. 375 of HCDR  
The southeast quarter of the tract sold for one dollar.  
  
Dated April 21, 1883, filed May 3, 1883  
Recorded in Vol. 15, p. 530 of HCDR  
The southwest quarter of the tract sold for one dollar.  
  
Dated June 14, 1887, filed July 5, 1887  
Recorded in Vol. 21, p. 261 of HCDR  
The remainder of the tract (northern half) sold for one dollar.

13. Heirs of Joe Nathan Hirsch to Ralph Gregory Beil et UX Gail Kimes Beil  
Dated June 28, 1972, filed July 20, 1972  
Recorded in Vol. 711, p. 377 of HCDR

Joe W. Hirsch, Independent Executor, Peggy L. Hirsch, Mary H. Stern,  
and Frances Rosengarten sell tract and home for \$40,000.00.

*Ralph Gregory Beil*

*Gail K. Beil*

# TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

BOX 12243 • CAPITOL STATION • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711 • PHONE 475-3268

August 24, 1979

Mr. Bill Southwell, Jr.  
The Southwell Company  
P.O. Drawer 299  
San Antonio, Texas 78206

REG. 5525

RE: #1829 Medallion 16" x 12" building  
marker without post (attached to wood)  
Weisman-Hirsch House

Harrison County

Dear Mr. Southwell:

Enclosed is an application for #1829 Medallion 16" x 12" building marker without post (attached to wood), Weisman-Hirsch House, Marshall, Harrison County, Texas.

We would appreciate a rubbing of this inscription.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Miss) Ann Goldman  
ag

SHIP TO: Dr. & Mrs. Gregory Beil  
313 South Washington Ave.  
Marshall, Tx. 75670

Lifestyle

A HOMECOMING: COVENANT AND COMMEMORATION

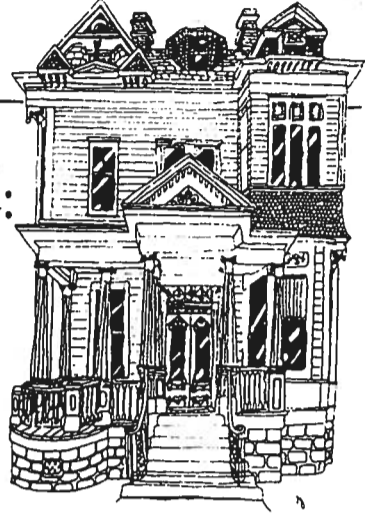


Illustration by Thomas Neal



JOE WEISMAN HIRSCH AND HIS MOTHER'S NAMESAKE, GRANDDAUGHTER VALRIE ANN LUSKEY, 4, GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PAST.



DR. GREG BEIL AND GAIL BEIL ATTACH REDEDICATED MEZUZH TO FRONT DOOR FRAME OF WEISMAN-HIRSCH HOUSE.



LOUIS WEISMAN KARIEL SR. UNVEILS THE FIRST HISTORICAL MARKER RECOGNIZING HARRISON COUNTY'S JEWISH COMMUNITY.

On the clear, cold Friday morning which followed Thanksgiving, the house Joe Weisman had built in 1900 was twice-blessed.

Reciting in Hebrew and in English, a rabbi and a Methodist minister rededicated the house and watched as a mezuzah — a tiny sign of the Jewish covenant with God — was affixed to the front door frame. Then a Weisman descendant lifted the red drape from a Texas Historic Landmark plaque.

From the beginning, it had been a Jewish house, this finely-crafted castle of cypress and curly pine envisioned by a merchant whose mother had immigrated from Germany to New York after winning a lottery. As the Texas Historical Commission acknowledges, Weisman's home came to be a social center for Jewish East Texans. His son-in-law, Joe Nathan Hirsch, and daughter Valrie Weisman Hirsch continued that hospitality as the second owners.

The Texas marker, unveiled Friday by Louis Weisman Kariel Sr. is the first one placed in Harrison County which recognizes Jewish citizens.

Family and friends of the Weismans, Hirschs and the present owners gathered on the high front gallery and lawn, waiting as Dr. and Mrs. Greg Beil, Methodist "immigrants" from Houston, reaffirmed the Jewish traditions and history of the house they bought in 1972. The couple attached a small metal case containing a parchment scroll, or klaf, to the right of their front door, slanting at a slight angle toward the interior so that its blessings would be directed inside.

Maimonides — a Spanish rabbi, physician and philosopher — advised his fellow Jews not to regard the mezuzah as a household amulet or good-luck charm. Those who do so, he wrote, "not only fail to fulfill the mitzvah (one of many commandments for applying Jewish teachings to everyday life) itself but they have taken a great mitzvah, which involves the uniqueness of God and the reminder to love Him and worship Him, and treat it as though it were an amulet designed to benefit them personally."

The admonition also applies to the wish of non-Jewish occupants of a house to keep a mezuzah left behind by Jewish residents. Rabbi Hayim Haimov Dunon of Southfield, Mich. has written that with gentiles as well as Jews the "luck" charm concept is "an unworthy attitude."

The family now living in this house is Christian. Mrs. Sherer told the crowd of assembled guests, "but the message contained on the scroll inside the mezuzah is a part of their tradition as well as it was to the Jewish family who first dedicated it."

The rabbi emphasized that "this injunction to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and might is inscribed on this door post to remind, forever, all who pass through her doors of the rich heritage that resides here — a heritage not of stained glass and old wood, but of love, wisdom and joy." He recited the traditional blessing of dedication.

"Baruch ata adonai v'v'hanu melech aher k'dushan b'mitzvatav y'livanu likboa mezuzah (Blessed art Thou, Lord our

God, King of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuzah!)"

And Mrs. Sherer expressed the hope that "the doors of this home will always be open to those in need of help. May the walls resound with words of wisdom, with happiness and joy, may it be blessed with peace."

With the unveiling of the Texas marker, the home became an official state landmark "and well it should be," commented Harrison County Historical Commission Chairman Max S. Late of Marshall.

Joe Weisman, son of Meyer and Mary Doppelmayr Weisman of Syracuse, N.Y., came to Marshall in 1866 to work as bookkeeper for L. Dreyfus until 1878, when he went into business for himself. He married Lena Young of Marshall and his father-in-law, Abraham Young, deeded him a section of property on South Washington Avenue in 1881. Weisman's first home there turned near the close of the century, and in 1900 he ordered up a 12-room, three-story masterpiece of Late Victorian architecture, commissioning C.G. Lancaster who had designed the Ginochuo Hotel, Starr and Lothrop homes and the county courthouse.

Weisman's long-lived department store, his record of civic involvement, support of Temple Moses Montefiore (the center for the local Jewish reform congregation), the role of his house as a social gathering place, and the preservation of an example of historic design combined to qualify the home for recognition in the form of a medallion.

Although Late has authored most of the house histories accompanying recent Harrison County marker applications, the Beils researched and wrote their own nine-page history scanning old newspapers, interviewing relatives of the previous owners and searching the house for fragments of the past.

Greg Beil emphasized in a brief greeting to Friday's visitors that much of the craftsmanship which went into the construction and ornamental finishing of the house was the work of Marshall citizens.

Ritual and ceremony were tempered by a book's worth of personal memories which guests shared with each other. Louis Kariel Sr. told the story of Mary Doppelmayr's lottery ticket and unveiled the medallion in her honor and her husband's. Miss Emma Mae Brotze, retired educator, recalled the children's milk fund begun here by Valrie Hirsch and the "lagniappe" which she and other shoppers received from Joe Nathan Hirsch when he managed Hirsch's. His son, Joe Weisman Hirsch, walked through the rooms of the second story and recalled the brother and sisters who had

occupied them. Great grandchildren — including Valrie Hirsch's namesake, five-year-old Valrie Ann Luskey of Fort Worth, played on an upstairs porch.

Mandel Weisman of Shreveport, grandson of Joe Weisman's brother Mose, marvelled that when it was the Hirsch home, "you could come here anytime — unexpectedly — and the table would be laid out with everything for a fine dinner."

The house, Phyllis Binstock Hirsch, Mrs. Joe Hirsch said, "was big and full, the children grew up knowing their grandparents."

Although those grand parents "Babe" and Daddy Joe are no longer alive, the daughter-in-law commented Friday morning that the Beils had "not only restored the house but preserved the tenets of Judaism" for the survivors of its early occupants.

"As Christians," Gail Beil remarked after the "Old Testament heritage is ours also I think we tend to forget that."

With the mezuzah — its new scroll swaying all comings and goings and the old one framed under glass in the parlor — the Beils are not likely to forget.

Noting that the Weisman family had dedicated the same mezuzah when the home was completed in 1901, Rabbi Robert Jacobs of Temple Emanu-El in Longview explained its contents, hand-written in Hebrew, the scroll's message on one side is "Shaddai," one of the words for God; on the other side, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 are printed. Persons entering or leaving the house touch the scroll through a small open space in the casing and are reminded of their relationship with and obligations to God.

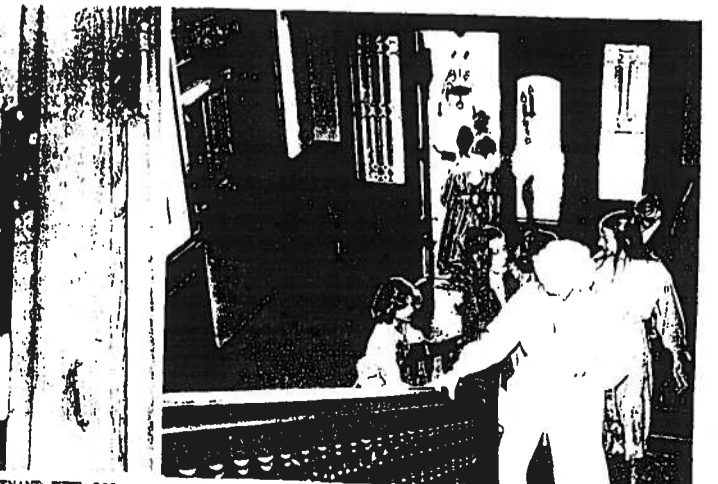
Joining Jacobs in the rededication, the Rev. Ann B. Sherer of White Oak United Methodist Church added that the mezuzah represents "the literal fulfillment of instructions given by Moses to the people of Israel as they completed their long journey to the Promised Land." In the Deuteronomy chapter, she explained, Moses reminded his people to love the Lord, to teach that love to children, to talk about the love of God and to "write it on the door posts of your house."



THE REV. ANN B. SHERER AND RABBI ROBERT JACOBS DELIVER A REDEDICATION SERVICE FOR THE RESTORED HOME.



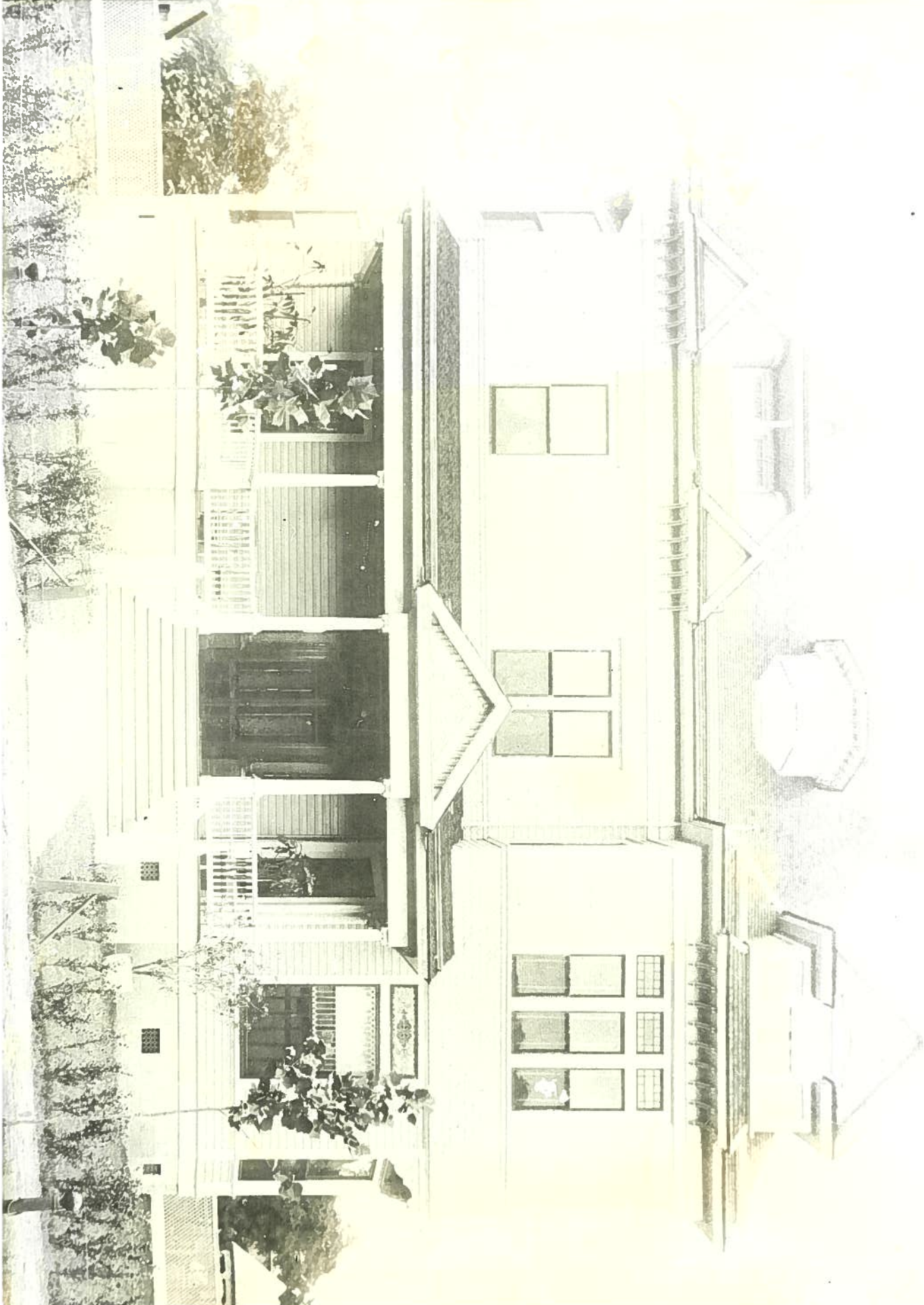
MEZUZH, SIGN OF THE COVENANT WITH GOD, FLANKS ENTRANCE TO THE BEILS' HOME.



GUESTS, INCLUDING RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE WEISMANS AND HIRSCHS, REVISIT THE 12-YEAR-OLD FAMILY HOME.

Text, photos by Juliet George









Harrison

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I approve of the inscription for:

Weisman-Hirsch House

as sent to me on August 8, 1979

RECEIVED  
AUG 23 1979

*Dr. Peggy DeJ*  
signed

Aug. 21, 1979

dated

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION