



Portrait of David S. Kaufman by Thomas Jefferson Wright.

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David Spangler Kaufman: Was the First U.S. Representative Elected from Texas Jewish?

David Spangler Kaufman: Was the First U.S. Representative Elected from Texas Jewish?

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This article explores the claims of many historians and scholars that David S. Kaufman, one of the first two people elected to Congress from Texas following its admission in the Union in 1845, was Jewish. Kaufman served in the House of Representatives from March 1846 until his death on 31 January 1851. Other scholars are either uncertain of his Judaism or deny it but nevertheless assert, as historian Bryan Edward Stone does, that Kaufman “was of Jewish descent.” Similarly, in an essay on Jews in Texas politics, Rabbi Steve Gutow and Laurie Baker James assert that “David Kaufman, elected to the U.S. House of Representatives when Texas gained statehood in 1846 [*sic*], was of Jewish descent.”¹

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1 Bryan Edward Stone, “On the Frontier: Jews without Judaism,” in *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas*, ed. Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman (Waltham, MA and Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, in association

As we demonstrate in this article, there is no evidence that Kaufman was either Jewish or had any Jewish ancestry. We review the many assertions that Kaufman was Jewish or had Jewish ancestry, explore the lack of any evidence that during his lifetime anyone claimed he was Jewish, examine Kaufman's religion and that of his family, demonstrate that many of his public speeches were overtly Christian, and try to make sense of why for more than a century and a quarter scholars and academic sources have claimed and continue to claim that he was either Jewish or had Jewish ancestry. We begin with the claims of his ancestry and faith. This is in part a microhistory of one individual and an exploration of how a long-standing historical myth was created.² Finally, we hope this article will serve as a caution to scholars of American Jewish history, who have often been so anxious to "discover" important Jews that they ignore the evidence while making arguments that are not logical.

Our article honors Lance Sussman, Paul Finkelman's longtime friend, colleague, coauthor, and sometimes rabbi, in three ways.³ First, we hope

with the Texas Jewish Historical Society, 2007), 22. Steve Gutow and Laurie Baker James, "Most Politics is Local," in Weiner and Roseman, 212–213.

2 "Natalie Zemon Davis: Three Brilliant Examples of Her Microhistory Writing," *Conversation*, 2 November 2023, <https://theconversation.com/natalie-zemon-davis-three-brilliant-examples-of-her-microhistory-writing-216785> notes that "microhistory is a method and approach to historical writing that deploys close analysis of an incident, a life or a specific location as a way into writing about wider society." Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History* 88 (June 2001): 129–144 applies this in part to US history. See also, "What is Microhistory?," MicroWorlds Lab, Duke University, <https://sites.duke.edu/microworldslab/what-is-micro-history/> (accessed 8 July 2024), which notes that "traditionally biography is one way to understand the individual in her or his historical world. Microhistory allows other ways to foreground one small moment or aspect of an individual's life." It goes on to say that "in addition to zooming in on an individual, a community or a unique event, a historian might use other microhistorical practices to illuminate the past." We strive to do both of these things in this article: to understand who David S. Kaufman was and also why so many scholars and historians have gotten his history wrong.

3 As coauthors, they produced, among other publications, Paul Finkelman and Lance J. Sussman, "The American Revolution and the Emergence of Jewish Legal and Political Equality in the New Nation," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 75 (2023): 1–47 and Lance J. Sussman and Paul Finkelman, "Contextualizing Rabbi Davidow's Memoir: A Historical

to make a modest correction to the scholarly and public understanding of antebellum American Jewish history. While this article will not shake up the world or change most historical interpretations of the period, it illustrates the problem of relying on names, assumptions, beliefs, and sometimes merely wishful thinking when historians and others search for Jewish participation in American history. Second, this article dovetails with Sussman's scholarship. His first book was an important study of Isaac Leeser and his role in antebellum Jewish history.⁴ This article is also about antebellum Jewish history. Moreover, we touch on the importance of Leeser and his newspaper, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*, in understanding nineteenth-century American Jewish history. Finally, one of the few scholars of American Jewish history to urge caution in accepting the claim of Kaufman's Jewish identity was Sussman's rabbinical predecessor at Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel in suburban Philadelphia, the indefatigable historian Rabbi Admiral Bertram Wallace Korn.⁵ In his own work on Jews and American slavery, Korn listed Kaufman along with Senators David Levy Yulee of Florida and Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana as proslavery southern Jewish members of Congress, but he also put a caveat in a footnote: "Although Kaufman has generally been regarded as stemming from Jewish parents, there is no contemporary evidence for the assumption; all such testimony is of comparatively late date."⁶ We confirm Korn's suspicion that Kaufman did not have Jewish parents and, in fact, had no traceable Jewish ancestry.

This article also considers one of the central difficulties in American Jewish history: defining who was Jewish. According to Orthodox Jewish

Introduction to Jewish Life in the Mississippi Delta, 1943–1961," *Journal of Southern Jewish History* 22 (2022): 141–149.

4 Lance J. Sussman, *Isaac Leeser and the Making of American Judaism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995).

5 Korn was also the first rabbi to become an admiral in the Naval chaplain corps and the first rabbi to become a flag officer in the Navy. Ironically (or not), the second rabbi to achieve this rank was Rabbi Admiral Aaron Landes, whose synagogue was across the street from Korn's and Sussman's.

6 Bertram W. Korn, "Jews and Negro Slavery in the Old South, 1789–1865: Address of the President," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 50 (1961): 191 and 191n97. Here he cited Henry Cohen et al., *One Hundred Years of Jewry in Texas* (Dallas, 1936), 8.

law (Halakhah), Jews are people who had Jewish mothers or formally converted to Judaism. But not all branches of Judaism accept this definition. Reform Jews have rejected the notion of matrilineal definition.⁷ Before the Rabbinic period (70–500 CE) Judaism followed the usual rule of the ancient world, and one's status was patrilineal.⁸ Especially in the United States, people can be culturally, ethnically, or politically Jewish without any religious observance. In popular culture, some people describe themselves as being a “bagels and lox Jew,” implying that they are not religious but acknowledge and even embrace their Jewish culture.⁹ Thus, in the context of American history, there are many ways that people are perceived as Jews and identified as Jews. Similarly, the modern nation of Israel maintains both a religious (Halakhah) definition of a Jew for some purposes (such as marriage and burial) but also clearly has a political or ethnic definition of being a Jew for the right to move to Israel, which is “vested in a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew.”¹⁰ These parallel (and sometimes dueling

7 Note the comments of Rabbi Mark Washofsky, “How Does Reform Judaism Define Who is a Jew?,” Reform Judaism.org, <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/answers-jewish-questions/how-does-reform-judaism-define-who-jew> (accessed 7 July 2024): “In 1983 the Central Conference of American Rabbis adopted the Resolution on Patrilineal Descent. According to this resolution, a child of one Jewish parent, who is raised exclusively as a Jew and whose Jewish status is ‘established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people’ is Jewish.” Similarly, Reconstructionist Judaism accepted patrilineal descent in 1968; see “What is Reconstructionist Judaism?,” My Jewish Learning, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/reconstructionist-judaism-today/> (accessed 9 July 2024).

8 “Prior to the Rabbinic period (70–500 CE), we find little trace of the principal of matrilineal descent. The Bible in fact seems to recognize a purely patrilineal descent, regardless of the identity of the mother” (Washofsky, “How Does Reform Judaism Define Who is a Jew?”).

9 Roberta Rosenthal Kwall, *The Myth of the Cultural Jew: Culture and Law in Jewish Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) argues that the “cultural Jew” is shaped by Jewish law and tradition. This is especially true for Jews who were raised in a Jewish environment and then later stopped practicing formal religion.

10 Law of Return in Israel illustrates the complexity of deciding who is a Jew. The law defines a Jew in the traditional Orthodox way: “4B. For the purposes of this Law, ‘Jew’

definitions) obviously did not apply to anywhere in the nineteenth century, but they illustrate the complexity of this issue and are helpful for historians of the American Jewish experience.

Some scholars assert that someone is Jewish, or not Jewish, if they perform, or do not perform, certain acts. For example, Gutow and James claim that Kaufman had Jewish ancestry (although they offer no evidence for this), but then assert he was not actually Jewish because “he married a non-Jew, received a Christian burial, and has no known Jewish descendants.”¹¹ We conclude that Kaufman was never Jewish and had no Jewish ancestry, but we do not base this conclusion on the Gutow/James rationale, which in fact rejects the Halakhah rule (a person born of a Jewish mother is Jewish) and defies logic, reality, and history. Two famous examples illustrate this. No one doubts that Judah P. Benjamin, the Confederate Secretary of State (and former US Senator), was Jewish. He was the son of two Jewish parents and while growing up in Charleston, South Carolina he attended congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim. He never converted to any other faith, and he remained identified as a Jew during his long public and political career.¹² As a young lawyer in New Orleans, he married a Catholic woman

means a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion.” However, under that law the following classifications of people are allowed to have immediate entry to Israel as immigrants: “4A. (a) The rights of a Jew under this Law and the rights of an *oleh* [immigrant] under the Nationality Law, 5712-1952***, as well as the rights of an *oleh* under any other enactment, are also vested in a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew, except for a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion.” “The Law of Return,” <https://www.nbn.org.il/life-in-israel/government-services/rights-and-benefits/the-law-of-return/>. While not directly admitting this, Israel clearly recognized the status of cultural, ethnic, and partially biological Jews, allowing them to move to Israel and be immediately welcomed, while denying that they might not be religiously Jewish. This law suggests a sort of “half-way covenant” for someone who has a Jewish father or a Jewish grandfather, but not a Jewish mother. But the law also makes clear that people born of a Jewish mother, like many who moved to Texas, remained Jewish, even if they did not practice their faith and married a non-Jew.

11 Gutow and James, “Most Politics,” 213.

12 It is possible his wife had him baptized as a Catholic while he was on his death bed.

of French ancestry, who raised their only child Catholic. When he died his widow had him buried in a Catholic cemetery in France with a priest officiating. But none of these aspects of his life and burial affected his status as a Jew under traditional Jewish law (born of a Jewish mother and had never formally left the faith or denounced it). Nor did being married to a Catholic woman mean he was not publicly seen as a Jew. Everyone knew he was Jewish. Similarly, US Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, the son of two Jewish immigrants from Austria, who had a bar mitzvah, was always publicly seen as Jewish. However, he married the daughter of a Protestant minister, and she never became Jewish. Frankfurter had no children (and thus no Jewish descendants), and he was buried, without a rabbi to officiate, in the historically Protestant Mount Auburn Cemetery, which contains a large gothic revival chapel with a cross on top of the main spire. There is no evidence he ever attended a synagogue after about age fifteen, except for ceremonial visits such as other people's weddings.¹³ But, like Benjamin no one doubts that Justice Frankfurter was Jewish. President Franklin D. Roosevelt nominated him for the Court in part because he was a Jew who was replacing the recently deceased Justice Benjamin Cardozo. Furthermore, he was a leading player in the American Zionist movement for much of his adult life. Especially on the early Texas frontier, a person could be identified as a Jew, while married to a Christian and never attending a synagogue or observing a Jewish holiday. We find absolutely no evidence that Kaufman was Jewish or had Jewish ancestry, but we do not reach this conclusion based on who he married, what faith his children or later descendants practiced, or how and where he is buried.

Beyond circumstances of birth, marriage, death, and interment, Jewish identification can be tied to ethnicity, culture, and asserting or at least acknowledging one's Jewish identity in public. Many Jewish immigrants to the United States never practiced their faith, affiliated with

13 Identification can go in the other direction as well. For example, General Mark W. Clark, one of the great military leaders of World War II, had a Jewish mother but formally converted to being an Episcopalian while at West Point, and to the best of our knowledge has never been considered Jewish, although he was ethnically part Jewish and Jewish under Halakhah until his conversion.

Jewish communities, nor openly acknowledged their lineage, but as children of Jewish mothers, they were still Jewish under traditional Jewish law, even if they married non-Jews. There are also people with Jewish fathers and presumptively Jewish last names, but with non-Jewish mothers who were considered Jewish, even if Orthodox rabbis did not consider them so. For example, Moses Levy graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1772, began to practice law in Philadelphia in 1778, and eventually won election as a judge. He was always known as a Jew and thus “faced antisemitic attacks from political and legal opponents.” But his mother was not Jewish, and there is no evidence that he formally converted to the faith of his Jewish father or that he was baptized in his mother’s faith.¹⁴ As historians we would consider Levy to be Jewish, as would the modern Reform Movement, but some people might not. Another test is whether people with mixed or ambiguous heritage self-identified as Jews. Max Baer, the world heavyweight boxing champion (1934–1935), who knocked out Hitler’s favorite boxer, Max Schmeling, had a Jewish father and a Christian mother and may or may not have been raised in some mixed Jewish tradition. But in the 1930s, in the face of Nazism in Europe and the pro-Nazi German American Bund, he fought in boxing rings with a large Star of David on his trunks.¹⁵ The son of a Jewish father, he was a Jew by very public self-identification.

We can ask a series of questions to determine whether or not Representative David S. Kaufman (or anyone else) might have been Jewish. These would include: 1) Did he have a Jewish mother? 2) Did he have a Jewish father? 3) Were his grandparents (especially his maternal grandmother) Jewish? 4) Did he formally convert to Judaism? 5) Was he seen by the public as a Jew during his lifetime (like Judge Levy in

14 Finkelman and Sussman, “American Revolution,” 13–14. In the modern era, websites and books focused on Jews, claim that the great actor Paul Newman was Jewish. He had a Jewish father and grew up in Shaker Heights, a very “Jewish neighborhood,” but his mother was Christian. See, e.g., “Paul Newman (1925–2008),” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/paul-newman> (accessed 9 July 2024).

15 Mike Silver, *Stars in the Ring: Jewish Champions in the Golden Age of Boxing: A Photographic History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 95–97. Jacob Henry Baer, Max’ younger brother, who fought as “Buddy” Baer, also wore a Star of David.

Philadelphia)? 6) Did he publicly self-identify as a Jew by worshipping as a Jew, joining Jewish organizations, or publicly declaring that he was a Jew through words or deeds, as Max Baer did by wearing a Star of David on his boxing trunks? Alternatively, as an indication of not being Jewish, we might ask, did he proclaim to be Christian, use Christian theological language in public speeches, and never assert he was Jewish? We argue that the claim that Kaufman was Jewish or had any known or recognized Jewish ancestry fails all these tests for being Jewish. He was not Jewish, and he had no recognizable Jewish ancestry.

Jews in Unexpected Places

American Jewish history often focuses on identifying or discovering what we call “Jews in unexpected places.” These are Jews who stand out for their successes where there were very few Jews. Some are quite surprising, including not only Yulee, who was the first US senator from Florida, but also the first US senator from Alaska, Ernest H. Gruening, and two nineteenth-century Jewish senators from Louisiana and one governor of that state, the infamous Senator Benjamin (who was also the traitorous secretary of state for the Confederacy), the almost unknown and long forgotten Senator Benjamin F. Jonas, and Governor Michael Hahn.¹⁶ Two Civil War-era Midwestern and Western Jewish governors had virtually the same name: Edward Salomon of Wisconsin and his cousin, Brigadier General Edward S. Salomon of the Washington Territory. There were early Jewish governors of Idaho (Moses Alexander), Utah (Simon Bamberger), and New Mexico (Arthur Seligman), and, in our own time, two Jewish governors and one US senator from Hawaii (Linda Lingle, Josh Green, and Brian Schatz). Jews on the frontier were also successful in local politics, such as Jacob Raphael de Cordova who won a seat in the Texas state legislature in 1847, and Michael Seeligson,

16 Hahn also served two nonconsecutive terms in the US House of Representatives (1863–64; 1885–86). In 1865 the Louisiana legislature elected him to the US Senate, but the Senate refused to seat him because Louisiana, the former Confederate state, had not yet been readmitted to the Union. Amos E. Simpson and Vaughn Baker, “Michael Hahn: Steady Patriot,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 13 (1972): 229, 230.

who was elected mayor of Galveston, Texas in 1853.¹⁷ One of our favorites in this search of anomalies in American Jewish history is Wyatt Earp, the lawman, gambler, and early twentieth-century Hollywood personality, who was not Jewish but whose ashes are buried next to his common-law-wife, Josephine Sarah Marcus, at the Jewish Hills of Eternity Cemetery in Colma, California, just south of San Francisco. Since non-Jews cannot be buried in Jewish cemeteries, we can only wonder how the remains of the deputy marshal from the gunfight at the O.K. Corral ended up there.

Among the strangest of these unexpected “Jewish” figures is David Spangler Kaufman (1813–51), who served in the Republic of Texas Congress in the 1830s and 1840s, and in the US House of Representatives immediately after Texas statehood until his death in 1851. Kaufman was born and raised near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Princeton University in 1833 in a period when Princeton had only a “handful of Jewish Students.”¹⁸ Almost immediately after graduating from Princeton he migrated to Natchez, Mississippi where he studied law under John A. Quitman, a wealthy Mississippi planter and slaveowner who later became a governor and congressman, as well as a general in the Mexican-American War.¹⁹

17 Natalie Ornish, “De Cordova, Jacob Raphael (1808–1868),” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/de-cordova-jacob-raphael> (accessed 10 April 2024). Bryan Edward Stone, “On the Frontier” 24–25 points out that de Cordova did not practice Judaism much, if at all, and married a Christian woman. But both his parents were Jewish, and his half-brother, Phineas, “was a cofounder of Austin’s Congregation Beth Israel.” By numerous standards, de Cordova was Jewish. See also Bryan Edward Stone, *The Chosen Folks: Jews on the Frontiers of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 44, 47, 59.

18 “An Update on the Earliest Records of Jewish Students at Princeton,” University Archives, Princeton University (blog), <https://universityarchives.princeton.edu/2016/05/an-update-on-the-earliest-records-of-jewish-students-at-princeton/> (accessed 10 April 2024). Kaufman is not mentioned in this article. His record in the alumni archives says he graduated in 1833: “Kaufman, David S., 1833,” Undergraduate Alumni Records, 19th century, 1800–1899, https://findingaids.princeton.edu/catalog/AC104-02_c2194?onlineToggle=false.

19 Natchez, on the Mississippi River, sent massive amounts of cotton to New Orleans, where it was then sent to Europe or other parts of the United States, especially New England. See Thomas W. Cutrer, “Quitman, John Anthony (1798–1858),” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas

Kaufman practiced law in Natchitoches, Louisiana for about two years and, in 1837, moved to the newly independent Republic of Texas. Since the number of extant Kaufman papers is limited, we have no evidence that would shed light on why he left the United States for the new Republic of Texas, but it seems likely that he saw opportunity in this brand-new nation, where a Princeton graduate who was also a (somewhat) experienced attorney could quickly achieve fame and fortune. If this was his motivation, he made the right move. He quickly won a seat in the Republic's Congress, twice serving as speaker of the House of Representatives before serving in the Texas Senate. He then became a diplomat, as the Texas Charge d'Affaires to the United States until Texas entered the Union in December 1845. Kaufman was then elected to the US House of Representatives. Kaufman County and the county seat, Kaufman (about thirty-five miles southeast of Dallas), are named for him. Many of the sources that we discuss below thus assert that half of the first Texas delegation to the US House of Representatives was Jewish.

Kaufman died unexpectedly in January 1851, while serving in Congress. The House held services for him with a eulogy by the Presbyterian minister Ralph Gurley, who served as chaplain of the House. In his eulogy, Gurley referred to "Christian revelation," "Jesus Christ," and "our Saviour."²⁰ By 1851, a few Jews had served in the House and one, Yulee, in the Senate. Jews were a small minority in the country but hardly unknown or exotic. While there was no synagogue in Washington at this time, there were Jewish communities in nearby Baltimore, Richmond, and Philadelphia, and it surely would have been possible to bring in a learned Jewish leader, such as Philadelphia's Isaac Leeser, to give the eulogy if *anyone* in Congress thought Kaufman was Jewish. But no one thought he was. Not surprisingly, after Kaufman's death there was no discussion of him in any Jewish publications, because no one thought he was Jewish.

State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/quitman-john-anthony> (accessed 15 July 2024).

20 *Obituary Services, on the Death of Hon. David S. Kaufman, of Texas, in the Congress of the United States, February 1st, and 3d, 1851* (Washington, DC: J. T. Towers, 1851), 13–16.

In 1888, Isaac Markens published the first history of Jews in the United States, *Hebrews in America*. Markens wrote about Jewish political, social, business, and religious leaders, including Jacob Raphael de Cordova, the most important Jew in early Texas. He also wrote about Representative Lewis Levin of Pennsylvania (the first Jew elected to Congress), New York Representative Emanuel B. Hart, Senators Yulee of Florida and Benjamin of Louisiana, and about the Texas Jewish communities in Galveston and Houston.²¹ However, Markens never mentions Kaufman. As we note below, no Jewish source had ever mentioned Kaufman while he was alive, and he is not mentioned in the first history of Jews in the United States. At this point, Kaufman was not “Jewish” or on the radar of anyone in the Jewish world.

Kaufman “Becomes” Jewish

Six years after Markens published his book, Kaufman suddenly appeared as a “Jewish” political figure. In 1894, more than four decades after Kaufman’s death, Rabbi Henry Cohen (1863–1952), who served as the spiritual leader of Congregation B’nai Israel in Galveston, Texas, from 1888 to 1952, wrote a paragraph on “Davis Kauffman,” [*sic*] in an article on “The Settlement of Jews in Texas,” published by the American Jewish Historical Society.²² Cohen gave no background on Kaufman other than noting his Pennsylvania birth, and he provided no information on his relationship to Judaism other than claiming that he was Jewish. It is not clear why Cohen asserted that Kaufman was Jewish. We assume that he thought Kaufman was Jewish because of his name. In a single paragraph in the 1894 article, Cohen summarized some of Kaufman’s accomplishments and at the same time turned him into a “Jew.”

Cohen enthusiastically sought to find all the early Jews in Texas. One

21 Isaac Markens, *The Hebrews in America: A Series of Historical and Biographical Sketches* (New York: self-pub., 1888).

22 Henry Cohen, “Settlement of the Jews in Texas,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 2 (1894): 139–156. See generally Hollace Ava Weiner, *Jewish Stars in Texas: Rabbis and Their Work* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999), 58–79. Weiner describes Cohen as “the Dean of Lone Star Rabbis” and as “the chief rabbi of Texas,” while admitting that “such a position” does not exist.

scholar recently praised Cohen as a “meticulous researcher,” but at least in the case of Kaufman, this is clearly not true.²³ It is doubtful Cohen did any research on Kaufman or read anything Kaufman wrote. Had Cohen investigated Kaufman, he might have been less certain that he was Jewish. As we will show below, in addition to the very Christian eulogy for Kaufman in Congress after his death, there was ample evidence of his Christian faith and that of his family. Everything in Cohen’s paragraph on Kaufman appears to come directly from an article in *The Encyclopedia of the New West*, published in 1881, which he cited in a footnote. That article, which was considerably longer than what Cohen wrote in 1894, did not mention anything about Kaufman’s faith, ethnicity, or family background. The words “Jew” or “Jewish” do not appear in the article. In other words, Cohen cited a source to prove that Kaufman was Jewish, but the source does not say that.²⁴

Thus, Kaufman emerged as “Jewish” because a rabbi in Galveston, who was not a historian and, as best we can tell, did no research on Kaufman, assumed that the first Congressman from Texas was Jewish because of his name. It is also possible that some congregant or another Jew in Galveston (or maybe somewhere else in Texas) told Cohen that Kaufman was Jewish. But Kaufman had been dead for more than four decades by this time. At the time of his death, no one in Texas (or anywhere else) thought he was Jewish, and he had never lived anywhere near Galveston. So, it is highly unlikely that very many (if any) Jews in that city (or anywhere else in the state) had met him or knew much about him.

Cohen’s parents immigrated from Poland to England, and Cohen grew up in an Ashkenazi community in London. He graduated from Jews’ College in London (today called London School of Jewish Studies) and spent a year leading a congregation in Kingston, Jamaica. In 1885,

23 Quote from Bryan Edward Stone, “On the Frontier,” 21. Oddly, Cohen never mentioned Jacob de Cordova or his half-brother Phineas, who “was a cofounder of Austin’s Congregation Beth Israel.”

24 “Hon. David S. Kaufman,” in *The Encyclopedia of the New West*, ed. William S. Speer and John Henry Brown (Marshall, TX: The United States Biographical Publishing Company, 1881), 327–328.

at age twenty-two, he moved to a synagogue in Woodville, Mississippi, and he became the rabbi at Congregation B'nai Israel in Galveston, Texas in 1888.²⁵ Cohen's background may explain why he assumed that Kaufman was Jewish because of his name. As a recent immigrant to the United States, who had only lived in the deep South, he probably had no idea that central Pennsylvania, where Kaufman came from, had large populations of Amish, Mennonites, Lutherans, and other German and central European Christians, and, as we demonstrate below, Kaufman was a common last name among Christians in that part of the United States. Some of the Kaufmans in Galveston were probably not Jewish, but many probably were.²⁶ It is likely that the British-born and educated Cohen easily assumed that someone named "David Kaufman" was Jewish. Thus, in 1894, Kaufman became "Jewish" at the hands of an immigrant rabbi with no training in history or research, who was trying to write about the sparse history of Jews in his adopted home on the Gulf of Mexico and who probably had no knowledge of the huge community of Christian "Pennsylvania Dutch" where Kaufman came from.²⁷

We do not mean to disparage Cohen. He was trying hard to find all the Jews he could in his adopted state. But, as the scholar who praised Cohen as a "meticulous researcher" also noted, Cohen "cast a wide net in his search for early Jews, and often erred on the side of accepting someone as a Jew even if he or she was not." Thus, he "identified every Jew in frontier Texas—and then some."²⁸ Kaufman was one of the "and then some." Had Cohen done any research on Kaufman, read some of his published speeches (which we describe below) or his eulogy in

25 Weiner, *Jewish Stars*, 61–65.

26 At this time there were about fifteen people named "Kaufman" in Galveston, with various spellings; see Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Galveston: 1899–1900 (p. 124), Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph894022/m1/160/?q=kaufman> (accessed 15 July 2024).

27 Significantly, Cohen, "Settlement," never mentioned Jacob de Cordova, the most prominent Jew who had lived there up to that time—a man who was born a Jew, spoke fluent Hebrew, and died a Jew, and whose father had been president of the famous Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia. This failure suggests the paucity of Cohen's research, his ignorance of Texas history, or both.

28 Bryan Edward Stone, "On the Frontier," 21.

Congress, or examined the community in Pennsylvania where Kaufman came from, he might have wondered why anyone would think Kaufman was Jewish. Nevertheless, once Cohen anointed Kaufman as Jewish, other scholars and more popular writers repeated his mistake.

A year after Cohen published this article, Simon Wolf published his massive compilation of Jews who had served in the Civil War and other conflicts. Relying on Cohen, Wolf identified “Davis S. Kauffman” [*sic*] as a Jewish soldier serving in the Mexican War, “at the battle of Neches,” and later “a member of Congress.”²⁹ A few years later the *American Jewish Year*, edited by the very important early Jewish scholar, Cyrus Adler, listed Kaufman as a Jewish member of Congress.³⁰ Anointed by Cohen as a Jew, two much more important players in the Jewish intellectual, Wolf and Adler, accepted Cohen’s determination that Kaufman was Jewish. In 1936 Cohen participated in the publication of a small book on Jews in Texas, and simply repeated what he had said forty years earlier about Kaufman.³¹

Subsequent books and articles on Jews in Texas continued to follow Cohen’s lead. The entry on Kaufman in the authoritative and scholarly reference work, the *Handbook of Texas* tells us that “No other Jewish Texan served in Congress until the 1970s,” implying of course that Kaufman was Jewish.³² The *Handbook* is published by the Texas State Historical Association, edited by historians with many entries written by professionals in the field. It is fully online and invites people to offer corrections for it. As of this writing no one has done this for Kaufman. This vetted “bible” of Texas history follows Cohen’s conclusion that Kaufman was Jewish. It is one of the first places any scholar or layperson

29 Wolf, *American Jew*, 74. Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* (Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1895) 74. Available at The Project Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/47135/47135-h/47135-h.htm>

30 Cyrus Adler, ed., *The American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 2, 1900–1901 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1900), 519.

31 Henry Cohen, David Lekowitz, and Ephraim Frisch, *One Hundred Years of Jewry in Texas* (Texas Centennial Exposition, 1936), 8.

32 Natalie Ornish, “Kaufman, David Spangler (1813–1851),” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/kaufman-david-spangler> (accessed 8 July 2024).

would look to find basic information about Jews in early Texas, and it has misled anyone interested in Kaufman for a very long time.

In 1989 Natalie Ornish published *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, asserting that Kaufman was Jewish. Although she never explained his Jewish background or heritage, she noted that in his Princeton University student file some unknown person had written “Hebrew extraction” on form. We will return to this document shortly. Despite no direct evidence about Kaufman’s background Ornish clearly asserts his Jewish faith and ethnicity by devoting many pages to him in her book on Jewish Texans. In 2011 Ornish published a new edition of *Pioneer Jewish Texans*. This book, published by a serious academic press, was presumably vetted by scholars and reflected any new scholarship since the book first appeared in 1989, but it had nothing new on Kaufman.³³ Thus, the myth first created in the late nineteenth century by Henry Cohen persisted into the twenty-first century.

In a relatively recent doctoral dissertation, Marilyn Kay Cheatham Goldman asserts that Kaufman was Jewish, noting that “Kaufman’s Jewishness has been questioned; however, he is included here because most historians consider him Jewish.” Apparently relying on Ornish, Goldman also asserts Kaufman’s Jewish identity because “Princeton records relating to Kaufman reveal that someone wrote in the margins of the registration papers that Kaufman was of ‘Hebrew extraction.’ Since this is not a modern description of a Jew, this notation must have been added about the time Kaufman studied at Princeton.”³⁴ While Goldman is correct that “Hebrew” is not usually a modern term, sometimes it is.³⁵ But she is also clearly wrong in asserting that “Hebrew” was not used well after Kaufman graduated from Princeton in 1833. In 1873—forty years after Kaufman graduated from Princeton—the emerging Reform

33 Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 63–68.

34 Marilyn Kay Cheatham Goldman, “Jewish Fringes Texas Fabric: Nineteenth Century Jewish Merchants Living in Texas Reality and Myth” (PhD diss., Texas A & M University, 2003), 189.

35 But see “Did Hebrews Discover America,” *Harvard Crimson*, 22 October 1970, <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1970/10/22/did-hebrews-discover-america-pshould-we/> (accessed 10 April 2024).

movement created a national organization, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations and two years later founded Hebrew Union College. The Young Men's and Women's Hebrew Associations (YMHA/YWHA) began in the 1870s, more than four decades after Kaufman graduated, and were going strong well into the mid-twentieth century. New York's 92nd Street Y flourishes to this day. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), was established in 1881, almost a half century after Kaufman graduated and thirty years after his death, and still exists with that name. Similarly, in 1888, Markens published the book *The Hebrews in America*.³⁶ In 1922, the notoriously antisemitic Supreme Court Justice James Clark McReynolds refused to attend a ceremonial event in Philadelphia, writing Chief Justice William Howard Taft, "As you know, I am not always to be found when there is a Hebrew abroad. Therefore, my 'inability' to attend must not surprise you." The pencil notation, "Hebrew extraction," could thus easily have been added in the late nineteenth or the first third of the twentieth century, during a period when there was rising antisemitism, concern about the "extraction" of people, and "Hebrew" was used by antisemites as well as philosemites.³⁷

In 2007, Hollace Ava Weiner, the author/editor of *Lone Stars of David*, called Kaufman "the Jewish Sam Houston." Having made this categorical

36 Markens, *Hebrews*.

37 Justice James C. McReynolds to Chief Justice William Howard Taft, c. February 1922, quoted in Alpheus Thomas Mason, *William Howard Taft: Chief Justice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1964), 216–217. The "Hebrew" he was referring to was Justice Louis D. Brandeis. In 1932, at the time of Justice Benjamin Cardozo's swearing in McReynolds told Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, "For four thousand years the Lord tried to make something out of the Hebrews, then gave it up as impossible and turned them out to prey on mankind in general—like fleas on the dog, for example." David. G. Dalin, *Jewish Justices of the Supreme Court: From Brandeis to Kagan* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2017), 104. Similarly, although not necessarily antisemitic, in 1936 "a Milwaukee district attorney" asked the state attorney general "whether orthodox Hebrews might be permitted to vote as absentee voters prior to election day, 7 April, since their religious precepts prohibited them from voting during the week in which the elections take place, as this was their religious holiday season." The state attorney general said that this was indeed permissible. See William W. Boyer, Jr., "Religion and the Police Power in Wisconsin," *Marquette Law Review* 37 (1953): 14.

assertion of his faith, she noted that the evidence of his Judaism is “conflicting.” Weiner pointed out that US Representative Martin Frost (who actually *was* the first Jewish US representative from Texas, serving from 1979 to 2005) argued that Kaufman was not Jewish because he was buried in the Congressional cemetery in Washington, DC without a Jewish ceremony.³⁸ Since there was no formal Jewish community in Washington until 1852, and the city’s synagogue was not incorporated until 1856, it is not entirely clear how there could have been a Jewish funeral in the city.³⁹ But Frost’s assertion about where Kaufman was buried is based on incorrect information. According to the archivist at the Congressional Historic Cemetery, Kaufman was never buried there. Rather, “Kaufman’s body was placed in the Public Vault 3 Feb 1851 and presumably taken from there to Texas.”⁴⁰ Representative Frost was correct that Kaufman was not Jewish, but where he was buried does not prove that. After all, based on Frost’s logic, many of the more than 5,500 Jewish veterans buried at Arlington National Cemetery and those buried in various Civil War cemeteries and military cemeteries overseas were not really “Jewish.” Another chapter in *Lone Stars of David* asserts that Kaufman was “of Jewish descent” but not actually Jewish because “he married a non-Jew, received a Christian burial, and had no Jewish descendants.”⁴¹

38 Hollace Ava Weiner and Kenneth D. Roseman, eds., *Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas* (Waltham, MA and Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, in association with the Texas Jewish Historical Society, 2007), 7 and Natalie Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2011 [1989]), 63–68.

39 Bill Davis, “Washington Hebrew of Congregation—The Early Years,” Washington Hebrew Congregation, 15 April 2022, <https://www.whctemple.org/2022/04/washington-hebrew-congregation-the-early-years/> (accessed 10 July 2024). See also “An Act for the Benefit of the Hebrew Congregation in the City of Washington,” Act of 2 June 1856, Chap. XXXVII, 11 Stat. 449.

40 Email from Dayle Dooley, archivist, Historic Congressional Cemetery, to Candace Jackson Gray, 10 May 2022.

41 Weiner and Roseman, *Lone Stars*, 7, 22, 213. See also Matt Lebovic, “For the Jews of Arlington National Cemetery, American Dreams Were Writ Large,” *Times of Israel*, 28 May 2018, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/for-the-jews-of-arlington-national-cemetery-american-dreams-were-writ-large/> and Bob Gerwin et al., “Burial of Jewish War Veterans in Military Cemeteries,” Jewish Funeral Practices Committee of Greater Washington, <https://>

But, as we noted above, none of these things would prove that he was not Jewish. The authors here seem to confuse being Jewish with being religiously observant. The point here is that a very recent book, published by the scholarly press of an elite Jewish university (Brandeis University), asserts that he was a Jewish political and military leader (like Houston) or that he came from a Jewish family, while quoting a member of Congress that he was not Jewish with an explanation that does not prove that. The member of Congress was correct, but for the wrong reason.

In 2011, Rabbi Kurt F. Stone, a prolific author who has taught history at the university level, listed Kaufman as a Jewish member of Congress. Conceding that his “Jewish lineage is somewhat murky,” Stone included Kaufman because “at least early sources, including the *American Jewish Yearbook* of 1901–1902, refer to him as being of ‘Hebrew extraction.’” In fact the *Jewish Yearbook* (it is actually the Yearbook of 1900–01) did not say he was of “Hebrew extraction,” but simply listed him along with twenty-one other members of the House and Senate identified as being Jewish. There is nothing in the Yearbook about why he is listed, or who his family was. All the facts of his life came from Cohen. Stone further supported Kaufman’s inclusion by noting that he figures “prominently” in Ornish’s book and thus “deserves a spot on the roster of Minyanites” in Congress. Finally, like Goldman, Stone, apparently relying on Ornish, explained that, in 1978, an archivist at Princeton found a pencil notation in his student file “of Hebrew extraction,” although Stone admitted that no one knows when that notation was made, who made it, or what was the basis of the notation.⁴²

dc.jewish-funerals.org/burial-jewish-war-veterans-military-cemeteries (accessed 9 July 2024). Kaufman was possibly later reinterred in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, as noted in “David Spangler Kaufman,” Texas State Cemetery, https://cemetery.tspb.texas.gov/pub/user_form.asp?step=1&pers_id=32 (accessed 9 July 2024), but there do not appear to be any records of this. Email from Will Erwin, senior historian, Texas State Cemetery, to Candace Jackson Gray, 21 March 2022.

42 Kurt F. Stone, *The Jews of Capitol Hill: A Compendium of Jewish Congressional Members* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2011). Stone cites the 1989 edition of the *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, but the current edition of the directory says nothing about his faith, and it does not appear that other editions did either, so the citation was probably not to his faith or ethnicity, but to the facts of his career; see “Kaufman, David Spangler

The Princeton records are curious. At least three authors—Ornish, Goldman, and Kurt Stone—rely on the records to prove that Kaufman was Jewish. As noted above, Goldman asserts they are contemporaneous to Kaufman being a student at Princeton in the early 1830s, calling them his “registration papers,” and claiming that the words “Hebrew extraction” were written on it when he was an undergraduate. However, a careful examination of the Princeton file demonstrates that the Ornish-Goldman-Stone analysis was quite wrong.

The term “Hebrew extraction” is not on a student’s “registration papers” from the 1830s. The term was written on a printed form that comes from a much later date, probably sometime between 1917 and the late 1930s. As we have already noted, in this period the term “Hebrew” was commonly used to describe Jews. At the beginning of this file is a printed letter explaining that the following documents were prepared for the creation of “General Biographical Catalog, 1746 to 1916,” of Princeton students to be edited by Varnum Lansing Collins, who was the secretary of Princeton University from 1917 to his death in 1936. Sometime around 1917, Collins began the arduous task of having his staff of researchers find biographical information on every Princeton graduate before 1917, placing the information on a three page form with fifteen biographical categories that was filled out for this project. Under the category “Family Background,” on the Kaufman form, the researcher wrote “Hebrew extraction.” In the same handwriting are notes about his career, the name of his wife, and the date of his death in 1851. This information, all on the same form and all in the same handwriting proves that the term “Hebrew extraction” was not on Kaufman’s student file from the early 1830s, since obviously a form from the 1830s could not have included information about who he married, his career, and when he died. Rather all of this information was put on a research form printed a century later. We can thus date the “Hebrew extraction” notation to a point after 1917 and before the death of Collins in 1936.

Some of the information on the form appears to come directly from

(1813–1851),” *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, <https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/K000021> (accessed 4 April 2024).

Cohen's published statements about Kaufman, and the *American Jewish Year Book* of 1900–1901. This would explain why the researcher at Princeton thought he was Jewish and used the notation “Hebrew extraction” to describe him. The record also includes a typed short biography of Kaufman taken directly from a 1935 book on the history of Texas.⁴³ Suggesting that this form with the term “Hebrew extraction” on it dates from middle of the 1930s, more than a century after Kaufman graduated from the college. The file also contains documents, including letters from Ornish asking for copies of these records. The statement “Hebrew extraction” was clearly written well after Cohen published his work asserting that Kaufman was Jewish. The Princeton researchers accepted Cohen's unsourced claim that Kaufman was Jewish and the repetition of this by Simon Wolf and then by Cyrus Adler in the comprehensive second volume of the *American Jewish Year Book*. category of “family record,” and did not include the other information that the form called for, such as the names of Kaufman's parents. Had they done any of this work, they might have concluded that Kaufman was not Jewish. But we have no information on who the researchers were, or what time constraints they were under. In the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century scholars used the notation to “prove” that Cohen was correct. Ornish seized on the two words, and everyone followed her.

In their most recent work neither Goldman nor Bryan Stone say Kaufman is Jewish, but they also do not say he is *not* Jewish, even though previously both had said he was either Jewish (Goldman) or of Jewish descent (Stone). In her 2003 PhD dissertation, as noted above, Goldman emphatically asserted that Kaufman was Jewish. But in her 2022 article on Jews in Texas from 1830 to 1845, Goldman made no mention of Kaufman.⁴⁴ This was the period when Kaufman rose from a recent

43 Baker, Philemon Morris [1833] to Steward, Daniel Jackson [1834], box 85, Development–Alumni Records, Alumni Records, Undergraduate, Princeton University Archives, Princeton, New Jersey. We thank the archivists at Princeton University for providing photocopies of these records. The typed short biography of Kaufman is from T. Z. Fulmore, *The History and Geography of Texas as Told in County Names* (Austin: Steck, 1935), 188–189.

44 Kay C. Goldman, “Early Texas Jewish Settlers, 1830–1845: Were They Really Jewish, and If So, Who Were They?” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 125 (2022): 271–288.

immigrant to a major political figure in the Republic of Texas. This omission is curious, since the article is titled “Early Texas Jewish Settlers,” and its subtitle asks, “Were They Really Jewish and If So, Who Were They?” If Goldman no longer believed that Kaufman was Jewish, despite her firm assertion in her dissertation that he was, this would have been the place to say that. Goldman’s failure to mention Kaufman may mean she believed the evidence on Kaufman’s Judaism is so strong that there was no reason to discuss him. Similarly, Bryan Edward Stone, the author of *The Chosen Folks* (2010), the most important scholarly book on Jews in Texas, mentions Kaufman once as a “notable” Texan without any discussion, one way or the other, about him being Jewish. But, as noted earlier, in 2007 Stone argued that Kaufman was of “Jewish descent.”⁴⁵

Thus, the cascade of the myth of the Jewish representative from antebellum Texas has continued, from Cohen in the 1890s to Simon Wolf to the *American Jewish Year Book*, to the Princeton archives, to the *Handbook of Texas*, to Ornish, to Rabbi Stone, to Goldman and Bryan Stone. All said he was Jewish or of Jewish heritage. Bertram Korn expressed doubts but nevertheless included him among antebellum southern Jews in Congress. Gutow and James assert he “was of Jewish descent,” then categorically assert he was not Jewish, because he had a non-Jewish wife, no Jewish descendants, and had a Christian burial. But as we noted above, such circumstances of his life do not prove if he was Jewish or not.⁴⁶

The Center for Jewish History and the American Jewish Archives also seem to believe Kaufman was Jewish. The Center for Jewish History contains a legal document signed by Kaufman, presumably because the Center believes he was Jewish.⁴⁷ Similarly, the American Jewish Archives

45 Bryan Edward Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 35 and Bryan Edward Stone, “On the Frontier,” 22. Stone also asserts that Kaufman was a “prominent political figure during...the Texas Revolution,” but all the evidence we have found suggests that he moved to Texas after the Revolution was over.

46 Steve Gutow and Laurie Baker James, “Most Politics is Local,” in Weiner and Roseman, 212–213.

47 David S. Kaufman Legal Agreement, Collection P-441, box P13, Center for Jewish History, New York, <https://archives.cjh.org/repositories/3/resources/618>.

collections contain a few documents relating to Kaufman, which were donated by Rabbi Korn.⁴⁸ These two archives are the premier repositories for the documents of American Jewish history. The Kaufman documents are apparently in their holdings because these important research centers think he was Jewish, or, in the case of the donations by Rabbi Korn, the American Jewish Archives accepts Korn's belief that Kaufman might have been Jewish.

The idea that Kaufman was Jewish also permeates public websites such as Wikipedia. Like other scholars, we would never use these sites to support scholarly conclusions. We cite them here not to prove who Kaufman was, or whether he was Jewish, but to show that in the world of non-scholarly history Kaufman is also perceived as Jewish. The Jewish Virtual Library, edited by a very serious scholar, lists Kaufman on a page about Jewish members of Congress and also has a very short biography of him.⁴⁹ Anyone interacting with the public on the issue of Jews in politics is likely to start there, following in the footsteps of Rabbi Cohen and so many others. A website connected to the history of Kaufman County, Texas asserts: "He was born 18 December 1813 at Boiling Springs, Cumberland Co PA" and that "after he became an adult David practiced the Jewish faith which was not of his heritage or lineage, nor the religion of his wife, and this fact has puzzled historians for more than a century." This statement is at best bizarre. The website provides no support for his alleged conversion or Jewish practice, although, as we note below, this site does present significant genealogical evidence that he was *not* from a Jewish family.⁵⁰ Similarly, Wikipedia tells us that

48 Email from Joe Weber, managing archivist at the American Jewish Archives, 5 April 2024: "we have two speeches that Kaufman gave to congress on slavery. They were donated by Bertram Korn when he gave his collection to the AJA."

49 "Jewish Members of U.S. Congress: House of Representatives (1845–present)," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-representatives-in-the-united-states> (accessed 15 July 2024) and "David Spangler Kaufman (1813–1851)," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/david-spangler-kaufman> (accessed 15 July 2024).

50 Kathey Kelley Hunt, "Kaufman County's Tie to the 'Underground Railroad,'" U.S. African American Griots, <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~aagriots/TX/kaufman/railroad.htm> (accessed 4 April 2024).

Kaufman “was of German-Jewish and Mennonite descent.” The rest of the entry does not say anything about his Jewish heritage, but it does say a lot about his Mennonite family. On one point, however, Wikipedia is more accurate about Kaufman than some Jewish historians and resources we have mentioned. Unlike the *American Jewish Year Book* in 1900–01 or the modern electronic data base, the Virtual Jewish Library, the *Handbook of Texas*, and numerous scholars of Texas, Wikipedia does *not* list Kaufman in its entry on Jewish members of Congress.⁵¹ Our point here is not that these non-scholarly sites are always trustworthy sources for history (although we usually find Jewish Virtual Library quite accurate). Our point is that the public perception of Kaufman and the sources that students and non-scholars are likely to use continue to repeat the statements of Rabbi Cohen and the scholars who incorrectly claim Kaufman is Jewish.

Kaufman’s Non-Jewish Family

But was this lawyer and politician actually Jewish? Despite what most historians and authoritative resources like the *Handbook of Texas* say, we conclude that there is absolutely no evidence that he was Jewish or had any known Jewish ancestry, or that he ever became Jewish or practiced Judaism. Although his family might have had some distant Jewish ancestry in Germany or elsewhere in central Europe and some residual “Jewish DNA,” there does not appear to be anything about him that was Jewish—except perhaps his name. So, we start with the name. To borrow from Shakespeare, was Kaufman “the Jewish rose of Texas”⁵² because of his name?

“David S. Kaufman” certainly sounds like a Jewish name. The names of other members of Kaufman’s family also sound Jewish; his brothers are Joseph, Abraham, and Daniel, and his father was also Abraham

51 “David S. Kaufman,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_S._Kaufman (accessed 9 July 2024) and “List of Jewish Members of the United States Congress,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Jewish_members_of_the_United_States_Congress (accessed 9 July 2024).

52 “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, By any other name would smell as sweet.” William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2 (first published 1597).

Kaufman.⁵³ These names makes David seem even more Jewish. But eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Christians often had Old Testament names. There were the Revolutionary War leaders *Benjamin* Franklin and *Samuel* Adams, as well as generals *Nathaniel* Greene, *Benjamin* Lincoln, and *Daniel* Morgan, and early Vice Presidents *Aaron* Burr, *Daniel* Tompkins, and *Levi* Morton. In early 1821 *Moses* Austin received permission to bring American settlers to Spanish Tejas, but like the Biblical Moses, he did not live long enough to enter his new promised land. Other western adventurers, frontiersmen, and explorers include *Daniel* Boone, *Zebulon* Pike, *Sam* Houston, and *David* Crockett. Levi Coffin was a leading antebellum Quaker abolitionist.⁵⁴ Most famously, there is the sixteenth president, *Abraham* Lincoln.⁵⁵ First names are

53 Daniel lived his entire life in Pennsylvania and, unlike his proslavery brother David, was an active abolitionist. He was sued for helping slaves escape. *Oliver v. Kauffman*, 18 F. Cas. 657 (C.C.E.D. Pa. 1850). For a discussion of this case, see Paul Finkelman, *An Imperfect Union: Slavery, Federalism, and Comity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 139–41, 251–255. See also “*Oliver et al. v. Kauffman* and Fugitive Slaves,” Blog Divided (blog), <https://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/blogdivided/2010/06/28/oliver-et-al-v-kauffman-and-the-verdict-on-fugitive-slaves-in-boiling-springs/> (accessed 15 July 2024).

54 Other signers of the Constitution apart from Franklin and Adams include *Nathaniel* Gorham, William *Samuel* Johnson, *David* Brearly, *Jonathan* Dayton, *Jared* Ingersoll, *Jacob* Broom, *Daniel* Carroll, and *Abraham* Baldwin. In addition to Franklin and *Samuel* Adams, signers of the Declaration of Independence include *Josiah* Bartlett, *Samuel* Chase, *Abraham* Clark, *Benjamin* Harrison, *Joseph* Hewes, *Samuel* Huntington, and Dr. *Benjamin* Rush. On Levi Coffin, see “Levi Coffin,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/people/levi-coffin.htm> (accessed 15 July 2024).

55 We are reminded of the dialogue in the great television series “All in the Family,” where Archie Bunker was ranting about Jews:

Archie: “That’s something the hebes do. They change their last names but keep their first names so that they’ll still recognize each other.”

Mike: “Whaddya mean, Arch?”

Archie: “Well, you take a guy like Isaac Schwartz. He changes ‘Schwartz’ to ‘Smith’ but he leaves Isaac. So he’s Isaac Smith. Jacob Cohen, he becomes Jacob Kane. See?”

Mike (sarcastically): “Yeah, I see what you mean, Arch. Like Abraham...Lincoln.”

Pause.

hardly a key to Jewish identity. Finally, we note that this issue is dedicated to a rabbi named “Lance,” with the Jewish author of this article named “Paul.” Sir Lancelot and St. Paul are hardly names we associate with Jews.

The name “Kaufman” (with various spellings) is also problematic for identifying faith and ethnicity. It is found frequently among Mennonites, Amish, and other Christians with German backgrounds, especially in Pennsylvania. As the genealogy company 23 and Me notes:

the surname Kauffman is very common among the American Mennonites and Amish; variants, such as Kaufman and Coffman, are also found. The main progenitors of the Mennonite bearers of this name were of Swiss ancestry but came to PA (Lancaster and Berks counties) from the Palatinate, Germany, in the 18th century. Later Mennonite immigrants bearing this name came to the US also from Galicia and Volhynia in Eastern Europe.⁵⁶

While most Jews probably see “Kaufman” as a Jewish name, in the United States today only 9% of people with this last name are Ashkenazi Jewish, while more than 42% are Christians of German or French ancestry and another 30% are non-Jews of British ancestry.⁵⁷

David’s paternal grandfather, John Kaufman, married Christianna Landis. Her first name is about as Christian as you can get. Her family name is common in southern Germany and Switzerland, and, according to the Mennonite Heritage Center, is heavily connected to Mennonites in Pennsylvania.⁵⁸ According to 23 and Me, the name Landis (or Landes)

Edith: “I didn’t know Lincoln was Jewish.”

See Paul Farhi, “Archie Bunker’s Heart: Carroll O’Connor Pumped A Tough Role Full of Truth,” *Washington Post*, 22 June 2001, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/2001/06/23/archie-bunkers-heart/cec2357f-4318-436f-8c47-4e7f6155aa5f/>.

56 “The Meaning of Kauffman,” 23 and Me Discovery Tool, <https://discover.23andme.com/last-name/Kauffman> (accessed 15 July 2024).

57 Ibid.

58 Forrest Moyer, “Our Immigrant Heritage: Landis/Landes,” Mennonite Heritage Center, 5 March 2018, <https://mhep.org/our-immigrant-heritage-landis-landes/> (accessed 4 April 2024).

is associated with German immigrants to Pennsylvania (the Pennsylvania “Dutch” as they are commonly known), who settled in areas such as the city of Landisville, in Lancaster County. However, there are also Jews named “Landis” or “Landes,” including Rabbi Admiral Aaron Landes, who was the senior rabbi at Temple Beth Sholom, the famous Frank Lloyd Wright synagogue in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, which is across the street from Rabbi Sussman’s synagogue. But the vast majority of people named “Landis” in the United States are Christian, whose ancestors came mostly from Germany and Switzerland.⁵⁹

Other indications of David Kaufman’s religion and ethnicity reaffirm that he was not Jewish. John Kauffman (1776–1851), his father’s first cousin (David’s first cousin once removed), was a Mennonite bishop in Annville, Pennsylvania. David’s great-grandfather Frederick Kauffman (1709–89), who immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1742, was also a Mennonite bishop.⁶⁰ David’s brother Abraham attended Andover Theological Seminary, was ordained as a Presbyterian minister, and later changed denominations and became an Episcopal priest.⁶¹ A Jewish family in the early nineteenth century would almost certainly not have sent its son to a Protestant seminary to become minister. We also know that David Kaufman’s parents and other relatives are buried in Mt. Zion Cemetery, a Lutheran cemetery, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania with hundreds of other people with German and English names, none of whom appear to be Jewish.⁶²

59 Out of all people in the United States with this name, 47% are of Swiss or German ancestry, 35% are of British Christian ancestry, and 5.3% are Ashkenazi Jewish; see “The Meaning of Landis,” 23 and Me Discovery Tool, <https://discover.23andme.com/last-name/Landis> (accessed 4 April 2024), citing the *Dictionary of American Family Names*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

60 Email from Joe Springer, curator, Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, to Candace Jackson Gray, 14 March 2022.

61 Hunt, “Kaufman County’s Tie.”

62 “Dickinson-Mt. Zion Lutheran Church Graveyard, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania,” <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~pacumber/zzcc/mtzion.htm> (accessed 4 April 2024). See also Hunt, “Kaufman County’s Tie.”

The Lack of Contemporary Evidence that Kaufman Was Jewish

We have found no mention of Kaufman in contemporary Jewish sources during his lifetime. An important example of this is the correspondence of Isaac Leeser and articles in his newspaper, *The Occident and American Jewish Advocate*. The paper reported on Jewish life in the mid-1840s and early 1850s, when David S. Kaufman of Texas served in Congress. By 1850, Leeser had some subscribers in Texas. As Bryan Stone observed, Leeser “saw world Jewry’s future on the expanding American frontier, ‘where the climate is mild, and the soil new and fruitful, capable of making ample returns for the labours of the husbandman.’”⁶³ Shortly after Kaufman’s death, Leeser noted that in “the immense State of Texas,” while “many Jews live scattered here and there, there is but one incipient congregation.”⁶⁴

In addition to being fully aware of Jews in the “immense State of Texas,” Leeser’s paper reported on Jewish political figures of the era, including Mordecai Manuel Noah of New York, Senator Benjamin from Louisiana, Representative Phillip Phillips from Alabama, and representative Emanuel B. Hart of New York. All were well-known Jewish political leaders, and three were members of Congress before the Civil War. But the *Occident* never mentions Kaufman. If the first Congressman from Texas had been Jewish, it seems likely that Leeser would have noted this, either during Kaufman’s life or at his death.⁶⁵ But the Christian David S. Kaufman never shows up in Leeser’s newspaper.

It is always hard to prove the negative, but in the brilliant analysis of the immortal (although fictional) Sherlock Holmes, this seems to be a wonderful example of a dog that did not bark.⁶⁶ Leeser never wrote about

63 Bryan Edward Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 40, quoting Isaac Leeser, “The Prospect,” *Occident* 4 (September 1846): 271. Also useful is Bryan Edward Stone, “West of Center: Jews on the Real and Imagined Frontiers of Texas” (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2003).

64 Bryan Edward Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 40, quoting Isaac Leeser, “The Importance of Missions,” *Occident* 11 (May 1853): 85–86.

65 I am indebted to Joe Weber of the AJA for checking the index card file of the *Occident* to confirm this.

66 Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Adventure of Silver Blaze” (first published in *The Strand Magazine*, 1892).

Kaufman because he knew that Kaufman was not Jewish. Leeser was based in Philadelphia. He would have known of the many Christians, especially Amish and Mennonites, named Kaufman. He might even have known of the reasonably prominent Abraham Kaufman family in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. He certainly would have known of any Jews from that county. Had Leeser suspected that Representative Kaufman—who was originally from Cumberland County—was Jewish, he doubtless would have investigated him and learned that his older brother was a minister, that his mother was named Mary Spangler, and that his grandmother's first name was Christianna. Leeser would have correctly concluded that David Kaufman was not Jewish.

Two men who are known to have been Jewish or of Jewish ancestry were contemporaries of Kaufman in Texas: Adolphus Sterne (1801–1852) and Jacob de Cordova (1808–1868). Sterne was born in Germany to a Jewish father and a Lutheran mother and eventually converted to Catholicism, the faith of his wife, although privately he may have been a deist. He fled Germany when he was sixteen to avoid military service and ended up in New Orleans. He was certainly ethnically Jewish. He could read and write Hebrew and “received a Jewish upbringing.” His father migrated to New Orleans where he was “a founding member of the Israelite Congregation of Shanarei-Chasset.” In his diary, Sterne mentioned his Jewish friends in Texas and elsewhere. Despite the absolutist assertions of some scholars that he was “clearly not Jewish,” Sterne was in fact ethnically and culturally Jewish, perceived as being Jewish by practicing Jews in Texas, and concerned about Jews in his adopted homeland, even if he was not technically Jewish under halakhah. But it is also possible that Sterne's observant father arranged to have his son converted as a young child while they lived in Germany. Sterne knew Kaufman and mentioned him a number of times in his diary, but there is no evidence he considered Kaufman to be Jewish or in any way a landsman.⁶⁷ It seems highly probable that, if Sterne thought Kaufman

67 Bryan Edward Stone, *Chosen Folks*, 34–37; Bryan Edward Stone, “On the Frontier,” 23–24; Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 21–22, 64 and Archie P. McDonald, “Sterne, Nicholas Adolphus (1801–1852),” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/sterne-nicholas-adolphus> (accessed 15 July 2024).

was Jewish, he would have mentioned it. This is one more example of evidence that Kaufman was not even remotely Jewish because “the dog did not bark.”

De Cordova was halakhically Jewish, the son of a Jewish mother and a Jewish father. He does not appear to have had much interest in organized religion. There is no evidence that he ever formally left Judaism or converted to any other faith. That would mean, under Jewish law, that he was Jewish from birth until his death. De Cordova spoke many languages, including Hebrew. While he married a non-Jewish woman, we have no evidence that he ever formally left Judaism, so it is reasonable to conclude that he remained Jewish his entire life. De Cordova, an early settler in Texas, came from a well-documented Jewish family that migrated to the United States from Jamaica. His father, a Jewish Jamaican coffee grower, moved to Philadelphia, where he became the *parnas* (president) of Congregation Mikveh Israel. His half-brother Phineas was a founding member of the first synagogue in Austin. Jacob moved to Texas in 1839, served in the Texas state legislature, was the founder of the city of Waco, and in 1849 published the first official map of Texas. At one point he owned a million acres of land in the state. There is no evidence from de Cordova’s papers that he thought Kaufman was Jewish, even while de Cordova was connected to the emerging Jewish presence in Texas.⁶⁸ Once again, we find no barking dog that connects Kaufman to Jews or anything Jewish.

Politician and Advocate of Christianity

Kaufman’s years as a public figure in Texas and national politics, as well as the eulogy in Congress after his death, underscore his Christian background. On 27 December 1840, Kaufman, then a leader in the

68 Bryan Edward Stone, “On the Frontier,” 24–25; Ornish, “De Cordova”; Carolyn Hyman, “De Cordova, Phineas (1819–1903),” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/de-cordova-phineas> (accessed 15 July 2024); “J. De Cordova’s Map of the State of Texas,” Bullock Museum, <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/discover/artifacts/cordova-map-state-of-texas> (accessed 15 July 2020); Ornish, *Pioneer Jewish Texans*, 21–22, 54–61; and James M. Day, *Jacob de Cordova: Land Merchant of Texas* (Waco: Heritage Society of Waco, 1962).

Congress of the Texas Republic, gave an address for the Austin Masonic Lodge for the feast of St. John the Evangelist. The next day, three Texas political leaders, including Sam Houston and Anson Jones (who would later serve as president of the Republic of Texas), asked Kaufman for a copy of his speech, which was soon published in the *Austin City Gazette*. In his speech Kaufman noted this was “the birth-day of the beloved disciple of the Prince of Peace, and an honored festival in the Masonic Calendar!” He said that speaking to this “Christian audience” was “gratifying assurance that the memory of the Evangelist is nurtured.” Even though Texas was still an independent republic, he expressed his veneration for George Washington and the “Star-spangled [*sic*] Banner.” He gloried that the Texas Revolution had led to “the complete overthrow of the enemies of the Anglo-Saxon race!”—by which he meant Roman Catholic Mexico—and also condemned the “savage Comanche.” He praised the laws of the new Texas government, which he claimed “now ascend to the living God.” Combining Masonic ideas, politics, White supremacy, and Christian faith, he noted that “Saint John the Evangelist and Saint John the Baptist challenge our peculiar admiration.” At this Masonic festival, he declared that “Masonry, like Christianity, though humble in its origin, and born as it were in a manger, has attained a lofty and elevated stand, and now numbers among its disciples many of the powerful on the earth.” He urged his audience to support Masonry: “Christians! Encourage it, for it is a beautiful handmaid of Religion!” He ended by hoping the audience would “catch a new inspiration from... the sanctity of the day, the invocation of Divine Grace.”⁶⁹

Kaufman deftly tied together Protestant Christianity, American patriotism, racism, and White supremacy in his public presentations. It is small wonder that in 1846 the proslavery overwhelmingly Protestant citizens of Texas elected Kaufman to represent their state in the nation they had just joined. In Congress, Kaufman was famously proslavery. That, of course, would not have precluded him from being Jewish. After all, Senators Yulee and Benjamin were aggressively proslavery, and both would serve the Confederacy. Senator Benjamin F. Wade (another

69 David S. Kaufman, “Address,” *Austin City Gazette*, 13 January 1841, 1–2.

Christian with a “Jewish” first name) correctly labeled Senator Benjamin an “Israelite with Egyptian principles.”⁷⁰ The comment was sarcastic and somewhat antisemitic, but also true. Had any of the antislavery members of the House of Representatives from 1846 to 1851, such as Joshua Giddings, Solomon Foot, or Amos Tuck, thought Kaufman was Jewish, they might have made similar comments. But no one did because no one thought he was Jewish.

In 1850, Kaufman gave a commencement address at Princeton, his alma mater. By now he was a famous and successful alumnus and a rising star in the Democratic Party. He was in his third term in Congress and on his way to what everyone assumed would be a long and successful political career. Kaufman’s Princeton speech was typical of many commencement addresses, urging the new graduates to go forward and do great things and warning them of the pitfalls of life. He praised the American democracy, where “no unbridled majority tramples on the rights of the minority” and there is “no adulterous union between Church and State—no test oaths as passports to civil and religious stations—and no fealty or allegiance but to God and the Constitution.” He declared that the Constitution is “inferior only in wisdom to the laws of God or the teachings of our holy Saviour.”⁷¹ Clearly, for Representative Kaufman, God was part of the Christian Trinity, along with the “holy Saviour.”

Throughout the address he wove four themes: his patriotism and glorification of the United States, his Christian faith, his support for slavery, and his support for White supremacy. Sometimes they merged. He bragged that parts of the continent that were “the home of the savage” in 1776 were “now fourteen sovereign States.” He praised the United States Constitution that allowed inventions to be patented in part because it “led Whitney to invent the cotton-gin which enriches the south, gives profitable employment to the north, feeds the operatives

70 Paul Finkelman, “An Israelite with Egyptian Principles,” *Jewish Review of Books* (Winter 2022): 22–23.

71 David S. Kaufman, *Address Delivered before the American Whig and Clisosophic Societies of the College of New Jersey, June 7th 1850* (Princeton: John T. Robinson, 1850), 9.

of Europe and provides cheap clothing for the whole civilized world!”⁷² Well before Senator James Henry Hammond declared that “Cotton is King,” Kaufman had made the same argument.⁷³ He explained that he was “a northern man by birth and a southern man by adoption.” He asserted, with no apologies, that “Slavery is not a spot upon the sun of our union” but something “planted” in the United States “by the permission of a just and overruling Providence.” He praised slavery for bringing the “degraded sons of Ham the benefits of civilization and Christianity.”⁷⁴ He praised the creation of Liberia where “Christianity is taught, and civilization is supplanting the reign of barbarism.” He declared that anyone who opposed slavery was “a Judas who would betray his Saviour.”⁷⁵ He ended by denouncing calls for women’s suffrage, “Agrarianism, Communism, Fourierism, and Socialism.” He argued that, for the supporters of these reform movements and proponents of the abolition of slavery, “the Bible is to be pronounced a cheat; Christ to be pronounced an imposter; Paul to be denounced as a hypocrite; the Sabbath is to be abolished” and “property declared theft.”⁷⁶

Kaufman’s address was filled with classical references, Latin phrases, and praise for both the North and the South, but his theme was clear: the Constitution, slavery, and White supremacy went hand-in-hand with Christianity. The address was a classic example of proslavery arguments wrapped in Christianity with several references to “our Saviour.” No one who reads this speech could possibly imagine that Kaufman was anything but a devout Christian. Had Rabbi Cohen read the speech, which was available as a published pamphlet, it is impossible to imagine he would have thought Kaufman was Jewish.⁷⁷

72 Kaufman, *Address*, 10, 11.

73 James Henry Hammond, *The Mudsill, or Cotton is King Speech*, 1858, reprinted in Paul Finkelman, *Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford, 2020), 78.

74 This was a common Protestant biblical interpretation to explain racial difference and defend slavery; see Thornton Stringfellow, *The Bible Argument; Or, Slavery in the Light of Divine Revelation* (1860), reprinted in Finkelman, *Defending Slavery*, 127.

75 Kaufman, *Address*, 16–17, 19–20.

76 *Ibid.*, 27–28.

77 David S. Kaufman, *Address Delivered before the American Whig and Clisosophic Societies*, 9.

Kaufman died unexpectedly on 31 January 1851. The House held services for him. In his eulogy, the chaplain of the House, Reverend R. R. Gurley, mentioned “Christian revelation,” “Jesus Christ,” “our Saviour,” “the Lord Jesus Christ,” and “Him” and ended with the following statement: “God grant this to each and every one of us, for Christ’s sake. Amen.”⁷⁸ It is not surprising, perhaps, that a Christian minister would use such language, but by this time there were Jews in the House who surely would have spoken to the chaplain about the appropriate language of the eulogy for a fellow Jew. But no one in Congress believed that David Spangler Kaufman, the grandson of a Mennonite bishop and the brother of an Episcopal priest, was Jewish.

Conclusion

Sorting out mid-nineteenth century American Jewish history is not easy. For more than a century, scholars have relied on the work of Simon Wolf to identify Jews who fought in American wars from the Revolution to the end of the Civil War.⁷⁹ Wolf identified “Davis S. Kauffman” [*sic*] as a Jewish soldier serving in the Mexican War, “at the battle of Neches,” and later “a member of Congress.”⁸⁰ David S. Kaufman was a soldier at the Battle of Neches, but it took place in 1839, seven years before the Mexican War began. For our purposes, the exact circumstances of Kaufman’s military service are less important than Wolf’s assertion that he was Jewish. Writing in 1895, Wolf had no documentation of Kaufman’s ethnicity or faith and no connection to anyone who knew him. His source was almost certainly Rabbi Cohen, who also called him “Davis S. Kauffman,” misspelling both his first and his last name.

Wolf published his compilation of Jews who served in the military a year after Cohen published his first article on Jews in Texas.⁸¹ In 1894,

78 *Obituary Services, on the Death of Hon. David S. Kaufman*, 13–16.

79 Simon Wolf, *The American Jew as Patriot, Soldier and Citizen* (Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1895). Available at The Project Gutenberg, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/47135/47135-h/47135-h.htm>

80 Wolf, *American Jew*, 74.

81 Henry Cohen, “Settlement of the Jews in Texas,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 2 (1894): 139–156.

both men presented papers at a conference at the Arlington Hotel, across the river from Washington, DC.⁸² It seems likely the two men knew each other and were aware of their parallel projects. Most of Wolf's papers were lost or destroyed, and the Cohen papers have no record of correspondence between the two men. But the fact that both men assumed Kaufman was Jewish, as well as the fact that both called him "Davis Kauffman" instead of David Kaufman, suggests that they were in contact. It seems most likely that once Cohen, the leading rabbi in Texas, anointed Kaufman as being Jewish, Wolf followed his lead.⁸³

The Shapell Manuscript Foundation project has been reexamining all the allegedly Jewish soldiers in the Civil War, demonstrating that a significant number of Civil War "Jews" in Wolf's volume were not actually Jewish. "Within the first year of the project, it became very clear that more than just a few of the soldiers in the book were not Jewish."⁸⁴ Wolf's project was huge, and he certainly did the best job he could. But his designation of "Davis" Kaufman as a Jew fighting in Texas was incorrect, not only with regard to his actual name and what war he was in, but also in regard to his "Jewish" faith. Why was Wolf wrong? In part, he did not have access to full information and like Rabbi Cohen,

82 The conference was well publicized throughout the United States, including Houston, Texas; see "The Houston Daily Post (Houston, Tex.), Vol. NINTH YEAR, No. 326, Ed. 1, Monday, February 26, 1894," Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph82839/> (accessed 15 July 2024).

83 The Shapell Manuscript Foundation explains Wolf's methodology as the best anyone can. While the research team for Wolf has added over 1500 names to Wolf's compilation, his effort at the time involved deep research into military records, pensions, and Jewish archives of various sorts.

84 Adrienne DeArmas, "Appendix 1: The Genesis of the Shapell Roster," in Adam Mendelsohn, *Jewish Soldiers in the Civil War* (New York: NYU Press, 2022), 229–232. Another example of this is Abraham Greenawalt (1834–27 October 1922), who was long considered a Jewish Civil War soldier who won the Medal of Honor during the war. But current scholarship has shown this to be inaccurate. On 4 April 2021, The National Museum of American Jewish Military History declared that it "does not recognize Abraham Green[a]walt as Jewish." His family was Evangelical Lutheran, and in 1919, his son asserted that he was a member of a Methodist church; see "Abraham Greenawalt—Medal of Honor Recipient," Jewish American Military History Articles, 4 April 2021, <https://jewishmilitary.org/articles/f/abraham-greenawalt---medal-of-honor-recipient> (accessed 10 April 2024).

he was misled by Kaufman's name. He was also misled by Cohen, who seemed to be an expert on Jews in Texas and published his article on Jews in Texas a year before Wolf published his book. Both men may also have had an over-zealous desire to find another Jewish leader in the development of the United States (for Wolf) and of Texas (for Cohen).

It is time to put this myth to rest.

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