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“They Ain’t Makin’ Jews Like Jesus Anymore”: The Musical Humor of Kinky Friedman and The Texas Jewboys in Historical and Geographical Perspective

Theodore Albrecht

For the past three decades or more, it has been difficult not to be aware of the name of Kinky Friedman, a Texan country singer of controversially humorous lyrics, the first full-blooded Jew to have sung at Nashville’s Grand Ol’ Opry, the leader of a country band offensively named The Texas Jewboys, a successful novelist whose detective stories portray himself as a transplanted Texas cowboy wise-crackingly solving crimes in New York City, a failed candidate for public office in Texas, and an essayist whose first-person pieces include a mixture of eyebrow-raising humor, common sense, and often thoughtful and thought-provoking wisdom.

As many readers know, there have actually been six flags over Texas, now largely forgotten by a widely franchised amusement park, whose name originally referred to them and whose rides and entertainment areas reflected them. First came the Spaniards from the south and later the French explorers from the east. Then, from the 1820s, the flag of independent Mexico, followed in the mid-1830s by a revolutionary and independent nation of Texas. Texas was annexed to the United States in 1845 but in the early 1860s lived under the flag of the Confederacy. Today, the state’s Lone Star flag still flies high next to the Stars and Stripes.

Apart from the Alamo, the overwhelming popular image of Texas is still cowboys and oil money, originating culturally in an extension of the Deep South in southeastern Texas, the Appalachian South (Tennessee and Kentucky) further west and northeast, and the American Midwest extending into central northeast Texas. Even so, much of its character in the mid- to late-nineteenth century was determined by immigrant groups, some in the cities, but many in folk islands in rural areas: vast numbers of Germans before the Civil War, as well as Czechs (including both Bohemians and Moravians) after the war, with smaller groups from Poland, Italy, France, Ireland, as well as Scandinavian and Baltic countries.¹
The phenomenon known as Kinky Friedman is difficult enough to describe, but this article attempts to place him within the culture and history of Texas, whose geographical size alone immediately dooms us to failure.

THE JEWISH ELEMENT IN TEXAS

Although several Jews (probably conversos) arrived with the early colonial Spaniards, the first Jewish family in modern Texas was probably that of Elijah (1775-1859) and Samuel (1804-1878) Isaacks, who came with Stephen F. Austin's American settlers in the mid-1820s. Adolphus Sterne (1801-1852), direct from Germany's Rheinlands, landed at New Orleans and settled in Nacogdoches in eastern Texas in 1826, and he even became the community's alcalde [magistrate]. Starting with Texas independence in 1836 and continuing after annexation in 1845, many Jews arrived among the European and especially German immigrants. Most of them came directly from Germany or Alsace to the flourishing Gulf Coast ports of Galveston and Indianola (which was destroyed by a hurricane in 1886), and not through such eastern immigration points as New York, Boston, or Philadelphia. In Germany and Alsace, most of the Jews who came to Texas had already, without losing their own identity, assimilated into their surrounding cultures and therefore thought of themselves as much German or Alsatian as Jewish. Like their Christian fellow travelers, they became part of the German-Texan or French-Texan cultures that, whether farmers, tradesmen, or merchants, simply transplanted their traditions onto a welcoming Texas soil.

By 1854 (some say 1859), the Jews in Houston had established Congregation Beth Israel, with others rapidly following in Galveston (1868), San Antonio (1874), Dallas (1875), Austin (1876), and—with many more in between and to follow—in Texarkana (1885) and Corsicana (1898). Despite a few attempts at Orthodoxy, most of these early congregations represented the assimilated Reform practices of Germany and nearby Central European regions. Eastern European immigrants remained a distinct minority within Texas Jewish culture, even when New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Chicago received thousands escaping Poland and Russia after 1880 or so.

During the Nazi period in Germany, Texas received relatively fewer Jewish refugees than other parts of the country, but several within music enriched the state's cultural life, from the famed Hungarian Antal Dorati (1906-1988), who became conductor of the Dallas Symphony, to the lesser-known Max Reiter (1905-1950), who became conductor of the newly reorganized San Antonio Symphony in 1939, to the virtually unknown Michael Balnemones (1876-1972), who had been a clarinettist at the Berlin State Opera, emigrated
in 1938, and became bass clarinetist of the same San Antonio Symphony a few years later. Among the Jews already living in Texas for generations, Houston lawyer Maurice Hirsch (1890-1983), son of an Alsatian immigrant and a member of the venerable Congregation Beth Israel, rose to the rank of general in the army and otherwise supported his city’s symphony orchestra, opera company, and art museum with his time and wealth. In San Antonio, the vivacious and cultured socialite Pauline Washer Goldsmith married symphony orchestra conductor Max Reiter, survived him by a quarter century, and was an active supporter of the organization until her own death.

During the world wars, Texas (with its warm, sunny climate) became the site of many army and air force training bases, and after World War II, the flood tide of American immigrants of all religious persuasions, seeking respite from heavy industry and cold winters up north, poured into the state. Among those was the Friedman family of Chicago.

FRIEDMAN FAMILY BACKGROUND
It is surprisingly difficult to develop an accurate biographical sketch of Kinky Friedman. Internet sources make it easy to compile the roughest outline of Friedman’s life, but he himself has written, “I don’t have a computer. Nor am I ever likely to have one. I think that the internet is the work of Satan.” Indeed, the devil is in the details, and in fact many sources contradict each other, lending credence to Friedman’s own pronouncement, “My life is a work of fiction.” Nevertheless, Friedman’s essays seem the best source for glimpses—whether brief or extended—into his life.

He was born Richard S. Friedman in Chicago on November 1, 1944, the son of S. Thomas and Minnie Samet Friedman. Kinky wrote that he and his father “derive[d] from a small, ill-tempered family,” presumably of Eastern European origin. Tom and Minnie later had another son Roger and, much later, a daughter Marcie.

Tom Friedman had been born on March 2, 1918, and grew up in the Chicago of the late 1920s. His first job was working for a Polish fruit and vegetable peddler on the old West Side, running purchases up to the top floors of the tenements. He remembered the word that the peddler seemed to shout out more than any other: “Kartofel” [potato]. He earned a B.A. in psychology from the University of Illinois in 1938 and a master’s degree from the University of Chicago in 1942. He then enlisted and “served as a navigator in World War II, flying a B-24 (‘Liberator’) bomber for the Eighth Air Force. His plane was called the ‘I’ve Had It,’ and he flew thirty-five successful missions over Germany, the last on November 9, 1944. He was the only man in the
10-man crew who had a college degree, and was also, at twenty three, the oldest in the plane. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf clusters.” He emerged as a first lieutenant in 1945. Many years later, Kinky’s sister Marcie once saw the aged Tom sitting alone in a darkened room and asked: “Is everything all right, Father?” His reply: “The last time everything was all right was August 14, 1945”——VJ Day, the day that Japan surrendered.

FROM CHICAGO TO TEXAS

Married to Minnie and with their young son Richard, born on November 1, 1944, Tom cast his eyes southward. In 1946, he was appointed executive director of the Southwestern Jewish Community Relations Council in Houston, Texas, and held that position until 1959. Minnie became the first speech therapist in the Houston Independent School District.

By 1950, the family lived at 2635 Nottingham in West University Place. Little Richard was a student at Edgar Allan Poe Elementary School; his mother took him swimming at Shakespeare’s Pool, and the family’s (black) maid, Lottie Cotton (1902-2003), made popcorn balls. Very early on, Tom taught him to play chess—so well that, by 1952, at age seven, he was the youngest of about fifty people, mostly adults, pitted against the world master Samuel Reshevsky in a marathon match. Even though Reshevsky beat them all in an hour and a half, little Richard Friedman’s photo appeared on the front page of the Houston Chronicle. Tom also taught Richard how to play tennis and how to belch. If the latter, then both generations qualify as what historian Ruth Gay termed “unfinished people.”

In 1952, while still living in Houston, the Friedmans bought a 400-acre ranch northwest of San Antonio and just south of Kerrville, named it Echo Hill, and transformed it into a summer camp for Jewish boys and girls to ride horses, swim in the river, and explore the hills. On June 19, 1953, at about the same time that the camp opened for the first time, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed at Sing Sing for having betrayed American atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. The distant execution of two fellow Jews so moved young Richard that he cried when he heard the news reports, and he later, as Kinky, mentioned it as a contrast to his first impression of hummingbirds at the new Echo Hill Ranch.

After having participated in his elementary school’s Christmas pageant in the third grade (although he refused to do so in the fourth), Richard, at age thirteen, was bar mitzvahed by Rabbi Robert I. Kahn at Temple Emanu El, a Reform synagogue founded as recently as June 8, 1944. The following year, he
cancelled his hated accordion lessons at the Bell Music School on Edloe Street and traded the instrument for a guitar.28

In 1959, probably to be nearer to the ranch year-round, Tom moved the family to Austin and began doctoral studies at the University of Texas, receiving his degree in psychology in 1963 and joining the educational psychology faculty there in 1964.29

AUSTIN

In Austin, young Richard enrolled in Stephen F. Austin High School and formed his first band, the Three Rejects, a name that foreshadowed the decades to come. In 1962, he enrolled at the University of Texas as a psychology major in Plan II, one of the highly advanced liberal arts programs so popular at the time. Here he established his second band, a rock ‘n’ roll group called King Arthur and the Carrots. One of its members, Chinga Chavin, dubbed him “Kinky” because of his curly “Jew-fro” hair (as he himself termed it), and the name has remained with him to the present day.30

In November 1963, when Jack Ruby shot President Kennedy’s accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, Friedman found another Jewish hero. Later he termed Ruby “the first Texas Jewboy.” Incensed at injustice, he and his friends picketed restaurants—even their own favorite haunts—where blacks were regularly denied service.31

In 1965 (some sources say 1966), Friedman graduated from the University of Texas and entered the Peace Corps (after being rejected once). Soon he found himself in the jungles of Borneo, where his job as an agricultural extension worker was to teach the local inhabitants—who had been farming their lands successfully for 2,000 years—how to improve their agricultural methods. Bored and frustrated by the system, Friedman read Joseph Heller’s Catch-22 for the first time, began drinking an excessive amount of tuak, a local hallucinogenic rice wine, and indulged in other extracurricular activities.32

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TEXAS JEWBOYS

During his two years in the Peace Corps, Friedman also envisioned forming a country music band, “Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys,” with a name reminiscent of “Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys,” a western swing band that had been popular in the Depression era.33 Conveniently mustered out of the Peace Corps, Kinky visited New York, then headed back to the ranch in Kerrville and, in 1971, established the Texas Jewboys, which he termed “a country band with a social conscience, a demented love child of Lenny Bruce and Bob Wills.”34
The post-World War II atomic era had given rise to a nostalgic thirst for American folk music, and there were genuine models in materials that had been collected as recently as the Depression era. Folksongs, often adapted from traditional sources or newly composed, became big business. Individual folk-song singers such as Pete Seeger (b. 1919) and Richard Dyer-Bennet (1913-1991) were joined by folksong groups, whether discovered or created outright by concert or recording promoters. The Vietnam era stimulated both nostalgia and social protest, the latter often in the form of outrageous satires or parodies. From the 1950s, Jewish mathematician-turned-satirist Tom Lehrer (b. 1928) extolled the joys of “Poisoning Pigeons in the Park”; in reviewing the year 1965, parodied the obituaries of the long-lived and many-loved Alma (Schindler) Mahler-Gropius-Werfel (1879-1964) in “Alma”; and satirized the Catholic Church’s new ecumenism and adoption of the vernacular in his “Vatican Rag.” Among the many folk groups, the Chad Mitchell Trio (with John Denver later replacing Mitchell himself) alternated folk and folklike fare with incredibly biting satire. Their “I Was Not a Nazi Polka” lampooned Germans who minimized the Nazis or their influence; their “Ecumenical March” treated the Vatican Council’s pronouncement that the Jews had not killed Jesus from a giddily relieved first-person Jewish standpoint. Perhaps their most ferocious satire of all, however, was “Twelve Days,” an adaptation of “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” with a new text from the viewpoint of the unrepentant Nazi, beginning gently and rising to Hitler-like ranting.

It was into this musical and social environment, then, that Kinky Friedman envisioned creating and promoting the Texas Jewboys, using a country-western format rather than the more common generic American folksong setting. He even wrote several songs while still in Borneo, including “Ride ’em Jewboy,” “They Ain’t Makin’ Jews Like Jesus Anymore,” and “We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to You.”

“Ride ’em Jewboy” is a deceptively comforting lullaby, as if sung by a cowboy rounding up cattle on the range. What the rider is quietly rounding up, however, are Jewish prisoners in a concentration camp, calmly heading for death and cremation. By contrast, “They Ain’t Makin’ Jews Like Jesus Anymore” is a first-person ballad about a Jewish cowboy who encounters a belligerent, belittling redneck in a bar. It includes several distasteful racial and ethnic slurs, extending to Mexicans, Asians, blacks, Jews, college fraternities, and even to the Greek Aristotle Onassis (then prominently in the news), before the insulted Jewish cowboy throws a single punch that leaves his adversary lying on the barroom floor. Thus, Friedman used the Jewish Jesus’ image of turning the other cheek to those who offended him, asserting that modern Jews, when
offended, are not afraid to strike back. Even so, the Jewish establishment was hardly immune to criticism in “We Reserve the Right,” where Friedman compared a rabbi’s refusal to admit a wayward member to services with a restaurant owner’s refusal to serve blacks and other undesirables. As Friedman later said, his songs had “a little something to offend almost everyone.”

The original Texas Jewboys consisted of Friedman, Kenny (“Snakebite”) Jacobs, Thomas William (“Wichita”) Culpepper, and Jeff (“Little Jewford”) Shelby, so called because he was a Jew and he drove a Ford. Of the four Texans in the band, only “Wichita” was not Jewish. Three other original members were described as “Texans and Jews by inspiration.” As Friedman wrote of the band’s genesis, they rehearsed for six days, and on the seventh they had a sound check.

In 1972, *Rolling Stone* magazine published a story about them, titled “Band of Unknowns Fails to Emerge.” In 1973, however, they did emerge and gave their first concert in Luckenbach, Texas, a nearly deserted German farming town between Fredericksburg and New Braunfels.

Originally a small farming community, established in the pre-Civil War wave of German immigration that also brought German Jews to Texas, Luckenbach, by 1973, had an antiquated general store, a small social hall, the ruins of a mill, a half dozen farmhouses, a single side road connecting everything together in a half-mile semi-circle, and an official population of approximately 21. Whether a German polka band or a country band played on weekends, the little town would draw a modest crowd from Fredericksburg to New Braunfels. Later (and with a stereotypical tongue placed firmly in his cheek), Friedman recalled that the Luckenbach residents “tied their shoes with little Nazis,” and that “the juke box contained mostly old German drinking songs and warped Wagnerian polkas.” He wrote: “I was a bit nervous until I looked out over the krauts. They were big and friendly and goose-stepping in time to the music. Soon they stopped polishing their Lugers altogether, clicked their heels, and broke into a moderately Teutonic variant of the bunny hop.”

One of the band’s earliest ventures, setting the tone for so many others and guaranteed to get an audience singing along with them, was “Asshole from El Paso,” Chinga Chavin and Snakebite Jacobs’s socially satirical parody of Merle Haggard’s clean-cut, patriotic country song “Okie from Muskogee.” Where Haggard sang, “And I’m proud to be an Okie from Muskogee. . . . And white lightning’s still the biggest thrill of all,” Friedman’s parody ran “And I’m proud to be an asshole from El Paso. . . . And the wetbacks still get twenty cents an hour.”

Then Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys set out across the coun-
try in a station wagon pulling a U-Haul trailer: from Kerrville to Nashville, Boston, and Los Angeles. Everywhere, they managed to offend somebody, if not for their lyrics, then for their costumes, which were not limited to just cowboy attire. In San Francisco, they were attacked by Native Americans (including folk singer Buffy Sainte-Marie) for wearing Indian feathered war bonnets and singing “We Are the Red Men Tall and Quaint.” In Buffalo, they were attacked by feminists and lesbians, who took offense at the song “Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed.” Blacks chased them in Denver, and rednecks sent them death threats in Nacogdoches, Texas, home of the early Jewish magistrate Adolphus Sterne. In Dallas, a nightclub manager unceremoniously tossed them off the stage, and they were rescued by none other than Willie Nelson, who became one of Friedman’s best friends. In New York, as Friedman recounts, “Mild-mannered, pointy-headed liberal Jews called us a shande [a shameful thing or a scandal].” Even Friedman’s own father Tom called the band’s name “terrible. . . . It’s a negative, hostile, peculiar thing.” Nonetheless, the recordings of Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys, begun in 1973, became treasured possessions to their cult followers.

On November 11, 1975, they played at the Austin City Limits, a studio-club where the shows were filmed for later airing on the livefromaustintx television program. The band wore their most colorful costumes, some only faintly reminiscent of their supposed cowboy origins, although Kinky, wearing dark glasses, was dressed in a blue cowboy outfit with a blue-fur-lined guitar strap. Their performance was predictably outrageous. The band and Friedman himself were at the height of their undisciplined, artistic, and humorous powers. “Asshole from El Paso” and “They Ain’t Makin’ Jews Like Jesus Anymore” received particularly colorful readings, and “Ride ‘Em Jewboy,” although used as an encore, suffering from technical problems, and truncated as the credits rolled, was—with its particularly poignant falsetto cattle calls—perhaps their most soulfully heartfelt performance on record. Even though an enthusiastic crowd cheered the live concert, the producers determined that it was too controversial for public broadcast and refused to air it, in spite of vigorous protests by Friedman and his friends.

But, with the Vietnam era over, America’s receptiveness to hard-hitting satire was changing. Political-musical satirist Mark Russell (b. 1932) noted that such material has “a shelf life shorter than cottage cheese.” Even the legendary Tom Lehrer wound down his career just as Kinky Friedman’s was on the rise, commenting that awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Henry Kissinger in 1973 “made political satire obsolete.” Kinky had arrived a decade too late.
1976, he did so alone, to his own guitar accompaniment, singing the relatively tame “Dear Abby.” In it, he calls himself a fan in Texas and asks how to find love but also wanders and wonders topically “if we lost more than the war.” Without the Texas Jewboys as a back-up and without the shock value of his offensively humorous lyrics, Kinky proved not to be a very accomplished or charismatic soloist.

Identifying with Jesus, as he often does in his essays, Friedman later wrote: “Like Jesus, I was a big believer in resurrection. I’ve had to resurrect my career on at least three or four occasions.” Indeed, he did just that in the late 1970s. Placing the Texas Jewboys on sabbatical, he moved to New York and began writing detective novels with himself, a transplanted Texas cowboy, as the wise-cracking sleuth. Here was the almost universally acknowledged success that had eluded him with his musical activities, and here, across twenty mysteries (published between 1986 and 2006), he could polish his style and add depth and consistency to his content. When his mother Minnie died in May 1985, he returned to Texas, mostly living in solitude at Echo Hill Ranch, except for tours with Willie Nelson and White House visits with both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

Even so, Kinky’s adventurous side took hold in 1986, and he ran for justice of the peace in nearby Kerrville—and lost. His father Tom stepped on a rainbow in August 2002, shortly after celebrating fifty years at Echo Hill Ranch. In 2006, Kinky ran as an independent for governor of Texas—and lost. In April 2009, he announced plans to run for governor again, this time as a Democrat, but withdrew in December. Instead, he sought the nomination for Texas agricultural commissioner—but lost again in the primary held on March 2, 2010 (Texas Independence Day). Surely his political career cannot be over so soon; surely there will be another “resurrection”!

Along the way Kinky Friedman added the role of essayist to his portfolio, publishing in the *Texas Monthly*, with a supposed readership of two million. Collections of the most universally humorous and enduring of these essays, along with other literary outpourings, have sold like hotcakes to a national audience. Occasionally, Friedman’s loyal readers have to forgive him if he reiterates his one-liners too frequently—but these words and phrases are old friends by now, just like the refrains from his shockingly satirical songs of thirty-five years.

CONCLUSION

Kinky Friedman may not represent the Jewish community in Texas as it existed historically and culturally during the authentic cowboy era before World
War II. In his musical humor, however, he has united a postwar immigrant's social awareness with the traditional cowboy image—embodied in one memorable line from his poignantly beautiful Holocaust round-up lullaby, “Ride 'Em Jewboy”—“Anything worth cryin’ can be smiled.”

NOTES

1 Summary background material may be found in cultural geographer Terry G. Jordan’s *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966).


4 Antal Dorati, *Notes of Seven Decades* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979/81), 194-216. The Dallas Symphony Orchestra was over four decades old and already a fine ensemble when Dorati arrived, but he can be credited for bringing it to artistic maturity within a relatively short period of time.


7 Diana J. Kleiner, “Hirsch, Maurice,” *New Handbook of Texas*, III, 630. Houston's oldest congregation, Beth Israel, founded in 1854 as Orthodox, became Reform fifteen years later.

8 The most extensive is “The Kinkster—An unofficial biography,” available online at http://kinkyfriedmansgreenwichvillage.wordpress.com, though the current Wikipedia article, which can be seen at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kinky_Friedman, despite inaccuracies, contains nuggets of information not easily found elsewhere. Other websites provide the lyrics of his songs and so forth.

9 Kinky Friedman, *The Great Psychedelic Armadillo Picnic: A "Walk" in Austin* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2004), 76; and *Texas Hold 'Em: How I Was Born in a Manager, Died in the Saddle, and Came Back as a Horny Toad* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005), 115-18, with the variant, “computers are the work of Satan.”

10 Kinky Friedman, *Cowboy Logic: The Wit and Wisdom of Kinky Friedman and Some of His Friends* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 184. Indeed, Jim Bessman’s program notes to the CD re-release of Friedman’s 1973 album *Sold American* (Vanguard 79734-2 [2003]), unnumbered 7, assert: “Richard Kinky ‘Big Dick’ Friedman (as he identifies himself on his answering machine) was born fittingly on Halloween, October 31, 1944, to be exact, in of all places, Palestine—Texas.”
Autobiographical references abound in Friedman’s detective novels as well, but these truly are “a work of fiction” (as noted in *Cowboy Logic*, 184) and are more subject to literary distortion than those that appear—sometimes repeatedly—in his essays.


Friedman never specifies his family’s origins, but his father’s first job as a helper to a Polish fruit-and-vegetable vendor in their Chicago neighborhood and Friedman’s own lack of identification with the Texas German population lead one to presume Eastern European roots. One suspects, too, that one or more of Friedman’s grandparents were his immigrant ancestors.

University of Texas, Faculty Council, Memorial Resolution, prepared by Professors Toni Falbo and Ed Emmer, April 14, 2003.

Friedman, *Scuse Me*, 190. *Kartofel* or *kartofle* is perhaps the most common Polish Yiddish word for potato (as opposed to *ziemniak*); *Kartoffel* is actually German, but probably went east with the migrations of the fourteenth century, among others.

University of Texas, Faculty Council, Memorial Resolution.

Friedman, *Scuse Me*, 191. Quoting his father’s reminiscences, Friedman also related that, “After each successful mission, the crew would paint a small bomb on the side of the plane, and, in the rare cases of downing an enemy plane, a swastika. When one incoming crew accidentally hit a British runway maintenance worker, someone painted a small teacup on the side of the plane, nearly engendering an international incident.”

University of Texas, Faculty Council, Memorial Resolution.

Friedman, *Scuse Me*, 192.

While some internet sources give Richard’s birth date as October 31, Kinky himself wrote that he was born on November 1, 1944, “in a manger somewhere on the south side of Chicago.” He further commented, “I lived there one year, couldn’t find work, and moved to Texas, where I haven’t worked since.” The month only is given in Friedman, *Scuse Me*, 190; the exact day in Kinky Friedman, *Kinky Friedman’s Guide to Texas Etiquette, or How to Get to Heaven or Hell Without Going Through Dallas-Fort Worth* (New York: Harper-Collins/Cliff Street Books, 2001), 38.

University of Texas, Faculty Council, Memorial Resolution.

Friedman, *Scuse Me*, 192; *Texas Hold ’Em*, 214-15. Friedman does not specify when they moved to Texas, but it may have been in time for school to start in September 1945 or possibly 1946.

Friedman, *Texas Hold ’Em*, 126-28, with more details. A photograph of the event is reproduced on the dust jacket of Friedman’s novel *Blast from the Past* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

Lottie Cotton was born in Liberty, Texas, on September 6, 1902, and died in Houston during the summer of 2003. In *Texas Monthly* (1 October 2003) and *Texas Hold ’Em*, 214-15, Friedman wrote in tribute that she was not really a maid or a nanny and that she did not live with them, but that she occupied a special place within the family and his affections. Indeed, this was often the case with domestic servants and their employers of two or three generations ago.
Samuel Reshevsky (1911-1992) was born near Łódz in Poland (then Russia) and came to the United States in 1920.

24 Friedman, ’Scuse Me, 193.
26 Friedman, Texas Hold ‘Em, 12, 42; ’Scuse Me, 192. Calling it “on the outskirts of Medina,” which is twenty-three miles south of Kerrville, Friedman noted its modern origins as “the old Sweeny place,” a ranch owned by Reverend Sweeny, a circuit preacher who lived there from 1921, drove a Model T Ford, and kept meat down in the well for refrigeration.
27 Friedman, Texas Hold ‘Em, 43.
28 Ibid., 129.
29 University of Texas, Faculty Council, Memorial Resolution. Tom Friedman was tenured already in 1967 and retired from the University in 1983. During the presentation of this material at the Klutznick-Harris Symposium on October 25, 2009, one audience member said that she had taken classes with Tom Friedman and noted both his excellent teaching and his devotion to Jewish social causes. In ’Scuse Me, 192, Friedman likewise specifies that his father’s area was educational psychology.
30 “The Kinkster” (website); Friedman, Texas Hold ‘Em, 99-101; ’Scuse Me, 86-87; Armadillo, 75.
31 Friedman, Texas Hold ‘Em, 99-101; ’Scuse Me, 87.
32 Friedman, Texas Hold ‘Em, 21-24, 101; ’Scuse Me, 37, 145, 165-69; Armadillo, 66.
33 A 2006 compilation of forty of their songs is available on Primo PRMCD 6012.
34 Friedman, Armadillo, 66.
35 For an alternately entertaining and embarrassing parody “retrospective” of such groups, see the 2003 motion picture A Mighty Wind, available on Warner Bros. DVD 27718.
36 Lehrer did not tour extensively, but his recordings reached millions in various issues and repackagings. See, for instance, his 1965 parody on the satirical television program That Was the Week That Was in the record album That Was the Year That Was, available on CD as Reprise/Warner 6179-2.
37 Among the Chad Mitchell (and simply Mitchell) Trio recordings for Mercury transferred to CD, see Collectors’ Choice Music CCM-374-2 (twenty-four items including the “Ecumenical March” and “I Was Not a Nazi Polka”); and CCM-372-2 (twenty-four items including “Twelve Days”).
38 Friedman, ’Scuse Me, 27-32.
39 Ibid.
40 Friedman, Armadillo, 66-67; Texas Hold ‘Em, 21-22, among other retellings over the years. The three inspired members were Billy Swan, Willie Fong Young, and Rainbow Colors.
41 Friedman, ’Scuse Me, 33.
42 Friedman, Etiquette, 36-37; Texas Hold ‘Em, 22; Armadillo, 67.
43 Glen E. Lich, “Luckenbach,” New Handbook of Texas, IV, 329; and personal observations, 1972-75. Religiously, Luckenbach was pretty much evenly divided among Catholics, Lutherans, and German Methodists.
Friedman, 'Scuse Me, 35. Most of Friedman's facts and fancies here are exaggerated, but they make for humorous reading in his essay.

Haggard's recordings and performances have been anthologized many times; for a CD reissue, see Merle Haggard, Okie from Muskogee, Capitol CDL-52746 (1989); Friedman's parody, cleaned up to read “Arsehole from El Paso” on the CD jacket, is Kinky Friedman: livefromaustintx (the unaired concert of 11 November 1975), New West Records NW6124 (2007). The texts of many of Haggard's and Friedman's songs are available from internet sources. Friedman's 1973 Sold American album, re-released on CD as Vanguard 79734-2, includes the lyrics to all of its thirteen songs.

Friedman, 'Scuse Me, 33.

Such costuming can be seen in connection with the song “Miss Nickelodian” in the DVD version of Kinky Friedman: livefromaustintx (11 November 1975), cited below.

Friedman, 'Scuse Me, 37-38; Texas Hold 'Em, 22, 158. The Yiddish shande has its origins in the German Schande.

Quoted on CBS Sunday Morning (21 August 2005).

In addition to the other CDs cited elsewhere in this article, the relatively current Friedman discography includes From One Good American to Another, Fruit of the Tune Music 1111 (1995), including late sessions from 1974, 1979, and the early 1980s (produced by Friedman's old friend Nick “Chinga” Chavin); and Old Testaments and New Revelations, Fruit of the Tune Music 777, a compendium of live performances of standard and previously unrecorded songs.

See Kinky Friedman: livefromaustintx (the unaired concert of 11 November 1975), New West Records, DVD, NW8044 (2007). The video program includes fourteen songs and runs fifty-seven minutes; picture and sound quality are both excellent. Friedman's running commentary included such words as “shit,” “hell,” and “goddamn” and characterized the Christian Trinity as “the Old Man, the Boy, and the Spook” and La Cienega Boulevard in Los Angeles as “La Cienigger.” There are few references to classical music in the Friedman canon, so it is perversely gratifying when Friedman refers to keyboardist “Little Jewford” Shelby as “a goddam Shostakovich!” While shocking, the language used at the concert must be considered within Friedman's own declaration that his material had “a little something to offend almost everyone” (Friedman, Texas Hold 'Em, 27-32).

Friedman, Texas Hold 'Em, 155-58. Fortunately, as noted above, New West Records issued the concert in CD and, especially, DVD forms in 2007, in the same series as they published similar Austin City Limits concerts by Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash.

Mark Russell's musical career lasted considerably longer than many others because he concentrated almost exclusively on political satire lampooning current events, aired only a few times each year on PBS. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Russell.

Lehrer also disliked touring and repeating the same songs night after night. See http://en.wikipedia.org/Tom_Lehrer.

Saturday Night Live, 1976-1977 (The Complete Second Season), NBC Studios DVD 61001030 (2007), disc 2 (23 October 1976). Consistent with the comments by Tom Lehrer and Mark Russell, Saturday Night Live has also had difficulty over the years in maintaining the high level of its satire and comedy.
Friedman, *Texas Hold ’Em*, xix; *’Scuse Me*, 12.

Friedman, *’Scuse Me*, 37. He did not specify exactly when this took place, but there seem to have been a number of revivals and reunions over the years.


Friedman has remained single, and his rationalizations abound in his essays, but his long-time girlfriend, “the great love of his life,” Kacey Cohen, had died in an auto accident in the late 1970s (Friedman, *Texas Hold ’Em*, 42, 198-202; *’Scuse Me*, 192).

Friedman, *’Scuse Me*, 67.

Friedman, *Texas Hold ’Em*, 42. “Steppin’ on a rainbow” is Friedman’s gentle euphemism for dying and provided the title for one of his mystery novels.

Friedman’s essay collections not otherwise cited or quoted above include *You Can Lead a Politician to Water But You Can’t Make Him Think: Ten Commandments for Texas Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007) and *What Would Kinky Do? How to Unscrew a Screewed-Up World* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2008).