



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Henry Cohen. Then, answer questions about it.

Henry Cohen 1863–1952

Rabbi Henry Cohen once said, “Other men play golf for recreation. My hobby is helping people.” For many years, he could be seen pedaling around Galveston on a bicycle, a list of people to visit—prisoners, the poor, the sick—scribbled on his shirt cuff.

Born in London, Cohen served congregations in Jamaica and Mississippi before arriving in Galveston in 1888. His home at 1920 Broadway became known as a place where needy people of any religion could seek help. He wrote books on Texas Jewish history in his spare time.

When the 1900 hurricane demolished most of the city and left thousands dead, Cohen sprang into action, delivering food and medical supplies in a mule-drawn wagon. Despite receiving offers to leave Galveston for more thriving communities, Cohen refused to abandon the city he had come to love.

Cohen is perhaps best known for his role in the Galveston Movement, which brought Jewish immigrants into the Port of Galveston to settle throughout Texas and the Midwest. Cohen met immigrants at the dock and provided advice and assistance, sometimes purchasing clothing and supplies for them with his own money.

In the 1920s, Cohen campaigned for prison reform in Texas, advocating vocational training and improved conditions.

In honor of Cohen’s lifetime of charitable work and dedication to social justice, President Woodrow Wilson called him the “foremost citizen of Texas.”

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Henry Cohen. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Give three examples of how Rabbi Henry Cohen helped people in his community.
2. What is the Galveston Movement, and how did Cohen participate in it?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Creating Connections.** Why might Jewish immigrants have come to America in the early twentieth century?