

# HENRY A. JASTRO

Commodore of Kern County,

Biography, Kinships and Politics, 1848-1925

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by Gilbert Peter Gia

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In 1905 Henry Alexander Jastro met President Theodore Roosevelt. "He is a big man," Jastro said, "strong and fearless, and, I am convinced, absolutely honest in his convictions. He means what he says, and I look to see some radical changes for the betterment of the conditions of the country."<sup>1</sup> Bakersfield could have said the same about Jastro. He was sure he was doing the best for Kern County, and although he was maligned, he was boss of county government for two decades. This study, however, is about his private life.

In 1892 Henry Jastro, 44, ran for Kern County Board of Supervisors,<sup>2</sup> defeated H. F. Condict by a margin of one vote,<sup>3</sup> and for the next twenty-three years was routinely reelected. In 1903 he was named general manager over J. B. Haggin's Kern County Land Company comprised of 1,395,000 acres in California, New Mexico,

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<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles Times, Jan 27, 1905, I-11

<sup>2</sup> J. Crusoe was manager of Haggin interests in Kern County (Kern County Californian, Jun 16, 1883, p 3), and he was a member of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, 1885-1890; On July 28, 1892 the Daily Californian supported Jastro's campaign for election.; Kern County Great Register of Voters, Oct 31, 1896, Precinct N1, Pt 11: Henry Alexander Jastro, 48, born in Germany, naturalized Dec 21, 1889 at Kern County, California

<sup>3</sup> Henry F. Condict accused Jastro of election fraud in District 5 voting of Nov 8, 1892. Jastro counter-charged that Condict received illegal votes. The record shows that illegal votes were cast for both candidates. The court granted 399 votes to Jastro and 398 to Condict. Condict paid court costs of \$92.25. Kern County Superior Court, Case 1484, Jan 9, 1894

Arizona, and Mexico. Jastro's energy and financial acumen steered Haggin's empire to profitability,<sup>4</sup> and Jastro's name was recognized across the West. His public life was replete with newspaper articles, but the key to his private life comes from his interview with *Sunset Magazine* in 1911<sup>5</sup> and a biography he supplied to Wallace Morgan's *History of Kern County*.<sup>6</sup>

Jastro the public man seemed to be everywhere at the same time. He served on boards of the Western Cattlemen's Association and California State Fair Association, and he testified before Congress on matters of agriculture and international trade.<sup>7</sup> He was an Ex-Officio Regent of the University of California, and Kern County Democrats nominated him for Governor of California.<sup>8</sup>

Local newspapers noted his departures and alerted readers of his impending returns, and if Jastro could not attend a board of supervisors meeting, voting was tabled; few county projects went forward without his blessing.

Henry Alexander Jastro,

*Sunset Magazine*, 1911 (by permission)

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<sup>4</sup> Unlike directors Thornton and Fergusson who preceded H.A. Jastro, Jastro's efforts made the land company profitable. Morgan, *op cit*, p 117

<sup>5</sup> *Sunset Magazine*, Jun 1911, v 26, p 633; *Morning Echo*, Jun 3, 1911, p 8, c3-8, "Pays tribute to H.A. Jastro." Cited in William Harland Boyd, *Notebook*, v.39, McGuire Local History Room, Beale Library, Bakersfield, California

<sup>6</sup> Wallace Melvin Morgan, *History of Kern County, California*. Los Angeles, California. Historic Record Company, 1914

<sup>7</sup> In Dec 1904 and Jan 1905 Jastro was at Washington, DC, speaking before the Forestry Congress on conservation and reforestation. While he was there he presided over National Live Stock Association sessions for which he received accolades for his use of parliamentary procedure. Jastro favored reciprocal trade relations with Europe as long as European markets accepted US beef, even though he cited deplorable conditions in the US meat trade. *Los Angeles Times*, Jan 27, 1905, p I-11

<sup>8</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, Mar 27, 1910; *Los Angeles Times*, Apr 3, 1910: "[Jastro] was endorsed for the Governorship at a recent meeting of the Kern county [sic] Democratic central committee, but he is in Europe and there is no reason to believe that this action was anything except a graceful compliment from his friends and neighbors."

At a board meeting in 1909, attorney J. R. Dorsey represented two Midway saloon owners who had been denied saloon licenses. Dorsey argued that the ordinance was so loosely worded that his clients had no way of knowing why their application was rejected, not what steps they needed to obtain licenses. Dorsey knew that Jastro opposed his clients and pressed the chairman to explain why the applications were denied. Jastro explained he had heard from "some good citizens" that one of the applicants was a gun fighter who a few days earlier had challenged another man to mortal combat in the street. He added that the ordinance was intentionally loosely worded so supervisors could easily turn down anyone they thought unfit to run a saloon. Said Jastro, "The board of supervisors is given arbitrary power in many instances, and I have heard it said that a man might as well try to climb straight up the side of a seven-story building as to break one of their rulings."<sup>9</sup>

## Background

Accounts say Jastro was born in either Prussia or Hamburg or Berlin or Posen, Poland sometime between 1848 and 1857.<sup>10</sup> Most likely it was Posen.<sup>11</sup> Jastrowie, Poznan, Poland is marked as *Jastrow*<sup>12</sup> on a Prussian map from the mid-1800s.<sup>13</sup> Poet Rush Blodget wrote that Jastro's surname was Jastrowitz,<sup>14</sup> and that claim also

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<sup>9</sup> Morning Echo, Mar 6, 1909. Jastro was Chairman of the Kern County Board of Supervisors, General Manager of the Kern County Land Company, a partner in several corporations, and on the boards of local public utilities.

<sup>10</sup> Latitude 52-24N, Longitude 16-55E; 1900 US Census of Kern County says Jastro was born in 1857.

<sup>11</sup> The history of 19th Century Europe complicates the question. Historical Poland was variously occupied by Russia, Prussia, and Germany, and Posen (spelled Poznan in Polish) refers to either a geographical region or the capital city. From 1850 to 1918 Poznan was a Prussian independent administrative unit.

<sup>12</sup> Latitude 53-45N, Longitude 34-29E

<sup>13</sup> Atlas des Deutschen Reichs, Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut (1883)

<sup>14</sup> Rush Maxwell Blodget, *Little Dramas of Old Bakersfield*, iUniverse, USA, 2006, ISBN- 10:0-595-41499-0

appears in *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*.<sup>15 16</sup> Jastro's sister Minnik Harris said her maiden name was Jastrowitz. That surname is uncommon among US immigrants, while the surname *Jastro* is absent from on-line immigration indexes. On the other hand the name *Jastrow* is common among emigrants from Prussia, and during his lifetime, newspapers occasionally spelled his name Jastrow. At some point the name became Jastro.

His immigration, about 1859, preceded the million who arrived in the US between 1870 and 1900. Another early immigrant from the 1850s was Kaspare Cohn whose diverse investments in Southern California included property in the San Joaquin Valley. Other Jewish settlers with connections to Kern County were seven Jacoby brothers, one of whom, Lesser Jacoby, operated an insurance office and clothing business in Bakersfield. Another Californian immigrant was Leopold H. Harris who married Henry Jastro's sister Minnik.

University of California, Letters Collection at Bancroft Library holds a pencil-written, 1887 interview of Henry Jastro.<sup>17</sup> Research Librarian David Kessler transcribed that document—written by Edwin W. Fowler who was General Representative for historian Hubert Howe Bancroft. Kessler's transcription:

"At the top is an ink scrawl, the rest is in pencil. 'Ans. 12.31.87' is noted at the bottom suggesting it was answered, or returned completed, to Fowler on December 31, 1887. The document is on stationery marked 'History Co. Publishers, San Francisco, Cal.' with the banner 'The historical works of Hubert Howe Bancroft' spread across the top and followed by 'Edwin W.

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<sup>15</sup> Prussia occupied Warsaw from 1794-1806 and passed laws ordering Jews to assume fixed family names to expedite taxation and the conscription into the military. In 1808 Napoleon decreed a similar requirement for Jews, and Czar Alexander continued the policy in 1845. Families sometimes created surnames by appending a suffix to a given name, such as the suffix *\_witch\_* in Ivanowitch, denoting "descendant of." (*Family Legacies, Linking The Past With The Present and the Future*, Jewish Genealogical Society of Southern Nevada, Inc., vol. 6, no. 3, 2003. Isaac Goldberg, "Ashkenazic Family Names, Origin and Development"). [jewishgen.org/jgs/jgs-southernnevada/FL/FL\\_6\\_3.PDF](http://jewishgen.org/jgs/jgs-southernnevada/FL/FL_6_3.PDF)

<sup>16</sup> Jan 1981. That source probably derived its information from Blodget.

<sup>17</sup> UC Berkeley, Bancroft BANC MSS C-D 810:219, system no. 008917691

*Fowler General representative for California.* "The stationary also has a space for 'Los Angeles, California., \_\_\_188\_ ' but this is not filled in in any way."<sup>18</sup>

*'Harry A. Jastro, Bak's.'* Bakersfield is clearly intended as the place, not sure what the little symbol means after it. 'J. born Germany 13 May '48 has had a very hard pioneer experience in the freighting and teaming bus. & then to K. Co., it is now worth a very large fortune. J's Co.[??] \$75,000. J. married in Bakersfield, has a handsome home, and is enthused over the part he took in the removal of the Co. seat from Havilah to Bakersfield & has been & is prominently identified with all the improvements of Bakersfield. He is now the treasurer & sec. of the new Hotel association which is to build a new \$75,000 Hotel at Bakersfield. J. owns property in Los Angeles and SF. J."<sup>19</sup>

Details in the Fowler interview mirror comments that Jastro made himself when he said he been a cowboy and he did "whatever I could." At the end of Jastro's life his "very large fortune" was more than \$10,500,000.

Accounts say Jastro immigrated to America "with his family" or "with his father" or "with his brother-in-law." In the Fowler interview, Jastro stated that his birth date was May 13, 1848, and that year matches up with a passenger identified in *Gale Research Passenger and Immigration List*.<sup>20</sup> On December 12, 1859 the ship *Simoda* arrived at New York from Antwerp, Belgium, and among the passengers listed on the Beiana Deck were three males traveling as a family group: Ludomir Jestero" age 53, "H. a." age 11, and "T. Cest..." age 7.<sup>21</sup> Eleven year-old "H.a." would have been born about 1848, and 1848 corresponds to his interview with *Sunset Magazine*. The family group included two unnamed females who occupied a cabin.<sup>22</sup> Farther down the manifest appears "L. Adler," age 44. Leopold Adler was important in the Jastro family history and will be treated later.

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<sup>18</sup> Email from UC Research Librarian David Kessler to Gilbert P. Gia

<sup>19</sup> The letter identifies a Harry Jastro, Henry Jastro's son. Herman Alverson Jastro, known as Harry, was born in 1875. It is unlikely he was the correspondent.

<sup>20</sup> Microfilm Roll 197, List 1205, Line 9

<sup>21</sup> Phonetic variation of "T. Jastrow" ?

<sup>22</sup> Later histories show that at least two of Jastro's sisters came to the US.

In an 1892 interview Jastro said he immigrated to the US when he was 15 and lived in Los Angeles for several years.<sup>23</sup> Henry Jastro, five feet seven inches tall, was as a drover and freighter of livestock for Phineas Banning on the Los Angeles-Catalina Island route.<sup>24</sup> In a 1902 interview Jastro said he was a trail boss on cattle drives to the San Joaquin Valley, Arizona and Nevada.<sup>25</sup>

Sometime in the late 1860s one of Henry Jastro's relatives died in Los Angeles, and from that estate he inherited livestock.<sup>26</sup> About that time he moved to Kern County, California. Bakersfield businessman Alphonse Weill recalled meeting Jastro in the late 1860s in Tehachapi when Jastro was a traveling salesman. A newspaper ad from 1870 shows Jastro in Bakersfield managing a brewery with Col. Thomas A. Baker.<sup>27</sup> Col. Baker contracted typhoid fever and died November 4, 1872, and six months later Jastro married Baker's 17-year-old stepdaughter, Mary Whalen.<sup>28</sup> Jastro built a home on 19<sup>th</sup> Street.

He engaged in raising sheep and selling wool, and sometime before 1874 Haggin & Tevis<sup>29</sup> hired him to manage sheep, but within months he quite and entered into a

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<sup>23</sup> Daily Californian, Apr 9, 1892. The article contains several direct quotes suggesting that the reporter obtained his information first-hand from Jastro.

<sup>24</sup> Banning and Jastro are connected to Maurice H. Newmark, born Jul 5, 1834 at Loebau, West Prussia. In 1853 when Newmark was 19 he removed to San Francisco. In 1865 Newmark was associated with Phineas Banning in a wholesale grocery concern. Newmark was a Mason and member of Pentalpha Lodge, No. 42. Los Angeles Times, Apr 27, 1912. Henry A. Jastro was a Mason.

<sup>25</sup> Daily Californian, May 13, 1902, "When Jastro Bossed Gage". Henry T. Gage was Governor of California, 1899-1903. In 1867 Gage was a corral boss when Jastro was superintendent of Banning's Arizona teams. "The two young fellows became well acquainted while working together, and the friendship formed at the time has continued uninterruptedly ever since." (Sunset Magazine, Jun 1911, v26, p 633)

<sup>26</sup> Obituary, Henry A. Jastro. Bakersfield Californian, Apr 15, 1925, p 1, 5

<sup>27</sup> In the Sunset Magazine interview he said he came to Bakersfield in 1871 and started with Haggin & Tevis in 1874. Jastro's beer advertisement appeared in Mar 22, 1872 in the Kern County Weekly Courier. See Gilbert Peter Gia, Bakersfield Breweries, 1866-1920, v4 at <https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:46601/>

<sup>28</sup> May 13, 1873

<sup>29</sup> "Haggin's trips to Kern county were very few and brief. He came in his private car, was driven direct to Belle View, where he looked at the blooded racers that were

partnership with Gustav Saenger.<sup>30</sup> Owing to Saenger's financial mismanagement, their partnership dissolved in two years and resulted in a civil lawsuit.<sup>31</sup>

In 1876 Jastro bought the William Baker Farm south of Bakersfield.<sup>32</sup> By 1883, 28 year-old Jastro was a wily, independent sheep man who was usually several steps ahead of Haggin ranch bosses. Manager W.B. Carr wrote in a business correspondence, "One of those smart fellows is Jastro. He always knows what I am going to do a day or two ahead of time --I got to San Emidio on Monday and he was there on Saturday. His sheep are in 10/21 --splendid feed -- If he is on our land I'll sue him!"<sup>33</sup> A few days later Carr wrote, "Jastro came to see me. Wants to sell his

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bred for him there, returned to his car and was sped away. Lloyd Tevis was a banker in San Francisco, and while his financial interest in the Kern county venture dates from the beginning of the operations here, his name was not connected with the firm, and for years was known locally as Haggin & Carr or Carr & Haggin and which appeared in the chief legal documents as J. B. Haggin." Morgan, op. cit., p 85

<sup>30</sup> Jastro was hired in the same year that Dr. George F. Thornton started his tenure (1874 to 1883) as General Manager of Haggin-Tevis properties. Bakersfield Californian, Aug 24, 1893; 1870 US Census, Aug 22, 1870, Kern County, Township 5, p 359A lists Gustave Sanger [sic], 38, stock raiser from Prussia.

<sup>31</sup> 16th Judicial court of Kern County, Case DC 398, Oct 12, 1881, Jastro vs. Saenger. The single-spaced, 75-page typed testimony quoted Jastro. He stated that on Nov 10, 1877 he formed a partnership with Saenger to buy sheep, raise them, and sell wool. Jastro said that in summer 1878 and fall 1880 he spent several weeks "or months" in the mountains as a supervisor attending to the bands. Jastro stated that spring of 1879 -1880 was a great year for grass, but the winter of 1879 was dry. Jastro said he did not run sheep after fall 1880, but in fall 1881 he rented a dipping operation from the Haggin people. Jastro trusted Saenger to attend to the money side of the partnership, but they disagreed on some book entries. The two parties settled out of court on Jan 24, 1882. Jastro's testimony indicates he had good command of English and used conversational expressions such as " ...hold on" and more formal usages such as " ... so singular was the..."

<sup>32</sup> It might have been the Haggin & Tevis that was involved in lawsuit the following year: Kern County Hall of Records, Bk 1, p 92, Feb 28, 1877. Lis Pendens [a lawsuit]. Kern Valley Bank vs. Henry A. Jastro et al. Named with Jastro are S.J. Lemming, C. Brower, C.C. Wible, S. Jewett, G.B. Chester, G.F. Thompson, J. Chester, J. Frank, J.T. Anderson, P.D. Jewett, J.F. Block [?], Robert Withington, C. Bayley. Suit brought to foreclose on mortgage made Apr 28, 1875 between H.A. Jastro and William Baker as noted in BK 2, of Mortgages, p 143, 144, 145. On NW 1/4 of W 1/2 of NE 1/4; and the NE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec 31 in Twn 29S, R28E MDB, 280 acres and all ditches and rights.

<sup>33</sup> Conner letters, Mar 19, 1883. Beale Library Local History Vault

sheep and will run our sheep department for \$200/mo for one year. Has the name of being tricky and not perfectly reliable. If he would do as well for us as he has done for himself, he would fill the bill. Can beat any man in Kern County stealing sheep feed!"<sup>34</sup> By April 27, 1883 Jastro was working for Haggin.<sup>35</sup>

Each Haggin & Carr business ventures in Kern County was operated as an independent entity with its own ledger. The network included the company's canal operations, machine-shops, dairy and cheese-production farms, beef and sheep rearing and butchering.

Although the ranches were expected to share men and equipment, competition among managers was expected. On June 28, 1885 Jastro wrote to Conner: "Mr. C.G. Conner. Dear Sir, I have consulted Mr. Carr about the feed on Sec 36. He thinks it will be best for me to move the sheep from the Brundage place, this which I will do tomorrow. Should there be anything in the way about it, I will either try and see you at your place or you can meet me on the road. I will travel the west road by the Wolf Place. Respectfully yours H.A. Jastro"<sup>36</sup>

Jastro's cooperative relationship with Conner may have annoyed Carr. In October, Carr wrote critically of Jastro and advised Conner to keep an eye on him. In spite of Jastro's success, Conner doubted him. "Jastro has his men cutting cockle burs with scythes, but I think a mower would be cheaper for our fields."<sup>37</sup>

By 1890 J.B. Haggin and Lloyd Tevis had problems with business, family, and health,<sup>38</sup> and in September 1890 they consolidated their interests as the Kern County

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<sup>34</sup> Conner letters, Mar 22, 1883. Beale Library Local History Vault

<sup>35</sup> J. Stoddard Atwood. *Kern County Land Company*, (1966 monograph), p 8

<sup>36</sup> Conner letters, Jun 28, 1885. Beale Library Local History Vault

<sup>37</sup> Conner Letters, Oct 18, 1885. Kern County Memorial Library, McGuire Local History Vault

<sup>38</sup> J. Stoddard Atwood, *Kern County Land Company*, Monograph, p 9, 1966, Beale Library, Local History: "Late in 1890, Haggin and Tevis, for reasons not completely revealed, but presumably heavily weighted by personal considerations, formed a corporation, Kern County Land Company."



Land Company. In 1893 later William S. Tevis, youngest son of Lloyd Tevis, became vice-president, and by 1895 he had pushed out William B. Carr who had managed Haggin & Tevis properties since 1874.<sup>39</sup>

Jastro accomplished much in a few short years. In 1886 and 1887 he was Worshipful Master, Free & Accepted Masons, Bakersfield Lodge 224,<sup>40</sup> in 1888 he was on the the Southern Hotel Association Board of Directors, and the same year he formed the Bloomfield Association to drain land south of Bakersfield.<sup>41</sup> Bakersfield Building & Loan Association was organized in 1890, and Jastro was president.<sup>42</sup> In 1892 he was elected to the Kern County Board of Supervisors,<sup>43</sup> in 1899 he was president and principal owner of Bakersfield Gas & Electric Company,<sup>44</sup> and in 1901 Jastro was on the board of Producers Bank at 19th and H.<sup>45</sup> Lynn Hay Rudy wrote,

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<sup>39</sup> "January 17, 1874. W. B. Carr, the 'world renowned Billy Carr, political Napoleon of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company,' is here looking over the country. He owns some land in Kern county and is anxious to get more. He has plans for the complete and thorough irrigation of the valley." Morgan, op. cit., p 77

<sup>40</sup> The senior officer of a Masonic Lodge is Worshipful Master. Jastro served the lodge in that capacity in 1892.

<sup>41</sup> The Kern County Land Company's efforts to sell small parcels were unsuccessful, and land sales were discontinued. In 1887 upon the recommendation of Alphonse Weill, the concern of L. Slessinger [Schlessinger?] and associates of San Francisco bought Charles Kerr's 2700-acre ranch south of Bakersfield near the north shore of Kern Lake. The property was named Bloomfield Ranch and plans were made to drain it and sell small tracts. (Kern County Californian, Jul 30, 1887, Feb 18, 1888. "H.A. Jastro, Secretary"). In 1925 Jastro owned a 3000-acre ranch that adjoined Greenfield Ranch. It earlier name was Union Avenue Colony (Bakersfield Californian, Apr 15, 1925, pp 1, 5, 14).

<sup>42</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Apr 15, 1925, p 1

<sup>43</sup> Los Angeles Times, Nov 1, 1895: "Grand Jury Report Scorches Many Present And Past County Officials. Indictments brought against some." In a closely-typed, 120 page report, Supervisor Jastro and thirteen other county officials were indicted for misfeasance. See also Daily Californian Oct 31, 1895. Jastro was exonerated.

<sup>44</sup> Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly, Jan 1981, v13, p 171; Lynn Hay Rudy, *Granddad, Hugh A. Blodget in Early Bakersfield*. Jenner, California (1999, privately printed), p 117

<sup>45</sup> Los Angeles Times, Jul 19, 1901

"H. A. Jastro, with the aid of strong fraternal associates, and others, was building a powerful local political machine."<sup>46</sup> His business successes and personal associations laid the foundation for his appointment, in 1903, as general manager of the Kern County Land Company.

## Kinships

Harris was born in 1836 in Prussia, emigrated in 1854 and arrived at San Francisco via the Isthmus.<sup>47</sup> He settled in Los Angeles in 1855. In 1869 Harris returned to Europe and married Minnik Jastrowitz.<sup>48</sup> The individual wills of Henry A. Jastro and Leopold H. Harris who founded of Harris & Frank clothiers of Los Angeles identify Jastro's sister as Minnik.<sup>49</sup>

In 1882 Harris and partners operated Quincy Hall Clothing House at Temple and Spring Streets in Los Angeles. Upon Harris' death in 1910 he left an estate equivalent to about \$25,000,000 in 2022 dollars. How much his wealth and influence promoted Henry A. Jastro is not known, but the growing circle of kinship was wealthy and influential. Harris' partner Herman W. Frank moved to Los Angeles in 1887, and in 1888 he joined the L. Harrison Company, which was Harris' firm until evolving to

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<sup>46</sup> J. Stoddard Atwood, *Kern County Land Company*. Monograph, 1966, p 10. Jastro replaced W.B. Carr, known in the state as a skillful Republican Party politician who reputedly handled all patronage in the state when Grant was president. "He [Carr] was close to the Big Four and served on the Southern Pacific Board."

<sup>47</sup> Max Vorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*. Jewish Publication Society of America, Los Angeles, 1970

<sup>48</sup> Minnik's maiden name was not in either will, but it did appear as Jastrowitz in a book printed in 1916 ten years prior to her death. Because it was a subscription printing, Minnik Harris most likely wrote or approved her own biography. (Martin A. Meyer, *Western Jewry, An Account of the Achievements of the Jews and Judaism in California*. San Francisco, 1916. [archive.org/stream/westernjewryacco00meyer/westernjewryacco00meyer\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/westernjewryacco00meyer/westernjewryacco00meyer_djvu.txt). Minnik ) "Minna" Jastrowitz Harris died in Sep 1926. The following publications, among others, do not supply primary sources when they say that Minnik's surname was Jastrowitz: James Miller Guinn, *History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles*, v2, p 371. Historic Records Co, 1913 (Google Books, <http://books.google.com/books>); *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*: 7:3:231, Apr 1975; 9:1:79 Oct 1976; 26:3:277 Apr 1984. (Los Angeles Public Library).

<sup>49</sup> nee, Lewin Hirschowitz

Harris & Frank—later Harris & Frank Retail Clothing. Herman Frank married Sarah Harris in 1888.<sup>50</sup> Their daughter Martha married Alfred Stern. In 1914 he was president of Wholesale Wines, formerly Charles Stern & Sons Distillers, his father's business. Rosa Harris married Melville Adler, and the Jastro and Adler families were close. After Jastro's wife died, daughters May and Louise boarded at Mrs. Caswell's Marlborough School in Los Angeles,<sup>51</sup> but the sisters probably spent much time with the Adlers.<sup>52</sup> Residing with Adlers in 1900 were two young sons, two servants, and a cousin named Louise A. Jastro.<sup>53</sup>

Probates of the Henry A. Jastro and Leopold Harris estates identify Jastro's sister Bertha, who was married to H.M. Cohn.<sup>54</sup> Cohn operated a kosher butchering business and later was a pawn broker at Los Angeles. Jastro's will of 1925 bequeathed funds to four of Bertha's children then living in Germany, and both the Jastro and Harris wills identify a another Jastro sister, Louise Sonnenberg, of "Lobeau, West Prussia."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> In 1896 Frank was vice president of Los Angeles B'nai B'rith.

<sup>51</sup> Los Angeles Times, Nov 1, 1895, p 9. In 1890 the Marlborough school moved into the "empty Marlborough Hotel at the corner of 23rd and Scarff Streets near the newly-established University of Southern California." ("History and Tradition," marlboroughschool.org/); Marlborough advertised itself as "a select school for sixteen girls, giving the comforts of a refined home. Advanced work in English, History, Literature, Art History, Latin, etc. Native teachers in modern languages, \$500 per year. Day pupils \$100. For circulars address Mrs. G.A. Caswell, Principal." (Los Angeles Times, Aug 18, 1894)

<sup>52</sup> In summer 1894-1895 Jastro and daughters vacationed on Catalina Island with other well-to-do Californians. Los Angeles Times, Aug 16, 1894, Aug 4, 1895

<sup>53</sup> 1900 US Census of Los Angeles

<sup>54</sup> H.M. Cohn may have been related to Kaspere Cohn who was born in "Loebau, West Prussia" and immigrated to California about 1850. (Los Angeles Times, Nov 20, 1916) In 1862 he and Leopold Harris owned K. Cohn & Company, hide and wool merchants on Main Street in Los Angeles. Henry A. Jastro's emigration date of 1859 and his appearance in California as a stock-handler corresponds to the same period that Harris & Cohn engaged in the livestock business. K. Cohn was also a major stock holder in San Joaquin Light & Power and in later years employed Henry Jastro's son, Harry.

<sup>55</sup> Lobeau does not appear on European maps of the mid-1920s but is in Atlas des Deutschen Reichs, Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut (1883) spelled Löbau

## Possessed Of Rare Unselfishness

Jastro's wife, May Emiline Whalen Jastro, was twenty-five in 1881. Her children were four years-old Herman Alverson Jastro (known as Harry), Mary Emiline Jastro (known as Mae) nine months, and Carolyn Louise Jastro (known as Carolyn), one month of age.<sup>56</sup> Skipping forward thirteen years, on May 24, 1894, nineteen year-old Harry was at school in Germany,<sup>57</sup> and Mary Emiline, fifteen, and Carolyn Louise, fourteen, were in public school in Bakersfield.<sup>58</sup> Mrs. Jastro retired to her room to rest, and when her husband looked in five minutes later he found her face down on the bed.<sup>59</sup> The next day the Californian wrote, "Possessed of rare unselfishness, abounding in tender solicitude for the welfare of others, blessed with a sunny and even temperament, she has walked through life a constant giver of blessings, a treasure to her friends, a queen in her home."<sup>60</sup> Eastern Star<sup>61</sup> conducted the

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(Latitude 53-45N, Longitude 17-62E), about 100 mi SE of the Baltic port of Gdansk. Today Löbau is Lubawa, Poland. The German city of Posen mentioned in Jastro biographies is now Poznan, Poland. After the revolutions of 1848 the region known as Poznań lost its autonomy and became part of the Prussian Province of Posen. With the unification of German States in 1871, Posen became part of the German Empire.

<sup>56</sup> Three Jastro children died in infancy: Harriet, Feb 6, 1874 - Nov 16, 1874 and Edward H. Jastro, Dec 24, 1876 - Apr 18, 1877. (Baker Family Album, Beale Library Microform Rm, Drawer 00). Baby Edna was born when Mrs. Jastro was 34: "Aug 28, 1893, Edna Jastro, one month, of Colitis" (*Death Book*, Kern County, Beale Library, McGuire Local History Vault)

<sup>57</sup> Lynn Hay Rudy private database of Bakersfield newspapers, May 25, 1894

<sup>58</sup> The Jastro children attended Bakersfield City Schools. Henry Jastro was a Bakersfield school trustee in 1891 when H Street School was built near his home. *Daily Californian*, Jul 27, 1891

<sup>59</sup> *Daily Californian*, May 25, 1894: "Mrs. M.E. Jastrow, 36, of parallisis" [sic].

<sup>60</sup> On Mar 23, 1901 Harry Jastro was appointed executor of his mother's probate. Oct 10, 1903 probate documents show her survivors as her 51-year-old husband, Henry, daughter Luisa A. Chadburn [sic], age 24 and residing at Long Beach, daughter Mrs. Mary E. Green [sic], age 22, at Los Angeles, and son Harry A., 24, of Bakersfield. Misspellings of the daughters' names suggest that Harry had limited communication with them. Kern County Probate No. 599, final, Jun 23, 1920

<sup>61</sup> The order of Eastern Star is based on teachings from the Bible. In general, female members must be related to Masons. Lynn Hay Rudy: "She was never

funeral. Two weeks later Jastro took his daughters to Los Angeles and Santa Monica for the summer.<sup>62</sup>

### Benno Jastrowitz

In 1933 Herman W. Frank published his autobiography entitled *Scrapbook of a Western Pioneer*.<sup>63</sup> He wrote that about 1883 the Harris family was in Germany visiting family, but when they prepared to return to the US, Sarah Harris decided to stay behind with her mother's oldest brother.<sup>64</sup> The uncle, unnamed in that account, was a brother of Henry A. Jastro. Autobiography also mentioned another Jastro brother. In 1887 Herman W. Frank was charge of Leopold Harris' Los Angeles warehouse, and he fired an incompetent manager named as his wife's uncle.<sup>65</sup>

He added that the uncle had immigrated to America when 19 years of age. The steerage manifest of SS Hohenzollern dated October 28, 1874 lists Benna Jastrowitz, twenty-four, who was a male merchant clerk traveling from Bremen to New York.<sup>66</sup> The name appears in the 1880 US Census for Los Angeles as 27 year-old clerk Benno Jastrowitz who boarded with Leopold and Minnik Harris. B. Jastrowitz was named in the Los Angeles Times of 1883 as a traveling salesman, "commercial traveler."<sup>67</sup> The Los Angeles city directory of 1888-1890 lists Leopold Harris and Benno Jastrowitz at 104-1/2-106 North Los Angeles Street, both employed with Leopold Harris & Company. The 1880 Census and the Los Angeles city directory

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mentioned in social events in the Bakersfield newspapers." Email to Gilbert Peter Gia, May 31, 2010

<sup>62</sup> Daily Californian, Jun 10, Jul 8, 1893

<sup>63</sup> Herman W. Frank, *Scrapbook of a Western Pioneer*, Times-Mirror Press, 1934

<sup>64</sup> Frank said he met Sarah about 1887.

<sup>65</sup> He also would have been Leopold Harris's brother-in-law.

<sup>66</sup> Email to Gilbert Peter Gia from Linda Deneroff.  
[immigrantships.net/1800/hohenzollern741028.html](http://immigrantships.net/1800/hohenzollern741028.html)

<sup>67</sup> Los Angeles Times, Mar 17, 1883, p 4: "B Jastrowitz of Los Angeles was among about 50 other passengers who passed Fresno last night will arrive in Los Angeles this morning at 7:55"

suggest that Benno Jastrowitz was either Henry A. Jastro's brother or his cousin, and he was probably the man Frank fired.

### Rabbi Mordecai Jastrow

Dr. Mordecai Marcus Jastrow was a distinguished Talmudic scholar who lived during Henry A. Jastro's time. On April 26, 1925, shortly after Jastro's death, the *Oakland Tribune* published an article entitled *Some Other Jastrows* that claimed that Henry A. Jastro "and his brother Marcus Jastrow arrived in New York 50 years ago." The statement could not be correct. Fifty years before 1925 was 1875, and in that year H.A. Jastro was married and living in Bakersfield. The *Tribune* article also said the two Jastrows came to the US in 1866. In that year Henry A. Jastro was a drover in California.

However, the two have some commonality. Dr. Jastrow was born in Ragosen, Prussian Poland,<sup>68</sup> which is about 200 miles west of Jastro's birthplace, Posen. With regard to their ages, in 1866 Dr. Jastrow was 42 and Henry Jastro was about 18. The difference in years makes it possible they were brothers, but unlikely. Rabbi Jastrow's sons, Maurice and Joseph Jastrow, seem to have no connection with Henry A. Jastro.

Jastro's son, Harry

### Harry Jastro

Harry attended Bakersfield schools until age fourteen, and from 1889 to 1894 he studied business and engineering in Europe. Harry returned to Kern County and after that was two years at San Francisco as consulting engineer for Power Development Company and San Francisco Gas & Electric Company.<sup>69</sup> For three years he was a consultant with the Edison Electric Light Company of Los Angeles on the eight-mile powerhouse tunnel in Kern Canyon. In 1906-1907 Harry worked for the the Colorado

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<sup>68</sup> Probably *Ragösen* at Latitude 51-58N, Longitude 12-16E; Washington Post, Oct 14, 1903. Dr. Jastrow was born in 1829.

<sup>69</sup> Harry Alverson Jastro, 20, Civil Engineer, is listed in the Kern County Great Register of Voters, Oct 31, 1896, Precinct N1, Pt 11.

Power Company at Boulder, Colorado. He was thirty-five in 1910 when he married Edna M. Crooks of Boston. The US Census of 1910 shows they lived at Taft where Harry managed the electric company.<sup>70</sup> In 1912 they lived in Bakersfield at 2318 20th Street.<sup>71</sup> Harry and Edna Jastro had no children.<sup>72</sup> In the early 1920s Harry had a heart attack and in April 1922 was admitted to St. Luke's hospital at San Francisco. A month later he died with his father and sisters by his side.

Henry A. Jastro's daughters have longer stories. William Hugh Greer built a fine house on Figueroa Street in Los Angeles in 1900,<sup>73</sup> and that spring he and Jastro's daughter Mae married in a private ceremony in Los Angeles at the home of May's cousin Sarah Harris Frank, with Henry Jastro present, the union deemed of "unusual importance in Jewish circles."<sup>74</sup> In 1903 Mr. and Mrs. Greer resided at Deming, New Mexico where Greer directed the phone company, managed Victoria Land and Cattle Company of Patagonia, Arizona, and had many other business interests.<sup>75</sup>

The next sequences of events suggest that Mr. and Mrs. Greer were estranged. When they sold their home in Deming in 1905, the Headlight advertised the Zinc Street residence as a "bargain" and said "This property will be sold cheap for cash." The Greers removed to Los Angeles.<sup>76</sup> The Albuquerque City Directory of

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<sup>70</sup> This was probably the Power Transit & Light Company of Bakersfield. Henry A. Jastro was a major stockholder.

<sup>71</sup> Morning Echo, Nov 13, 1912. Mrs. Lyman W. Lowell owned the house in 1917. (Bakersfield Californian, Jul 11, 1917)

<sup>72</sup> Bakersfield Californian, May 31, 1922

<sup>73</sup> Los Angeles Times, Feb 9, 1900

<sup>74</sup> Los Angeles Times, May 14, 1900

<sup>75</sup> Victoria Land and Cattle was a Kern County Land Company property. Henry A. Jastro was director, but he had other Arizona business interests. The Polk Arizona and New Mexico Pictorial State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1912-1913, p 163, shows Henry A. Jastro of Bakersfield, California as general manager of the Boquillas Land and Cattle Company of Fairbanks, Arizona.

<sup>76</sup> Chuck Hornung, *Fullerton's Rangers: a history of the New Mexico Territorial Mounted Police*, (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., 2005), p 31; "Mrs. May [Mae] Greer has returned from S.F. restored to health." (Bakersfield Californian, Jun 17, 1909)

1907 lists Greer's residence as the Commercial Club and "mining" as his business, but he was spending most of his days in southern California. Henry Jastro and Mae Greer visited relatives in Germany in early 1910, Jastro returned to Bakersfield that summer, and Mae stayed and toured Italy. During that time, in late September 1910 William H. Greer, thirty-eight, died in Southern California.<sup>77</sup> <sup>78</sup> Mae moved to Bakersfield,<sup>79</sup> and a Mrs. Samuel T. A. Loftus of Chicago stayed with her and her father for several weeks.<sup>80</sup> The Californian later wrote, "Mrs. May [Mae] Greer has gone to San Francisco for a week's visit with friends."<sup>81</sup> In each case there was no mention of William Hugh Greer.

### Mae Jastro Greer

Mae was in Bakersfield in 1911,<sup>82</sup> and early in 1912 she planned an extended world tour. The Californian wrote, "Mrs. May [Mae] Greer is planning to leave on

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<sup>77</sup> Los Angeles Times, Mar 5, 1910; "Jastro Going to Europe" Bakersfield Californian, May 30, 1910; Chuck Hornung, *Fullerton's Rangers: a history of the New Mexico Territorial Mounted Police*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2005), p 31; Search of ProQuest's Los Angeles Times historical database found no reference to Greer's death. On Sep 11, 1910 Henry Jastro was at the Van Nuys Hotel in Los Angeles. (Los Angeles Times, Sep 12, 1910)

<sup>78</sup> Chuck Hornung, *Fullerton's Rangers: a history of the New Mexico Territorial Mounted Police*, (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2005), p 31; Search of ProQuest's Los Angeles Times historical database found no reference to Greer's death. On Sep 11, 1910 Henry Jastro was at the Van Nuys Hotel in Los Angeles. (Los Angeles Times, Sep 12, 1910)

<sup>79</sup> Bakersfield City directories of 1913-23 show Henry Jastro at 2229-19th Street.

<sup>80</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Sep 29, 1910.

<sup>81</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Oct 10, 1910. Samuel Loftus of Loftus Brothers of Chicago was a long-time friend of Henry Jastro. Loftus had telegraphed Jastro in September instructing him to secure the best possible counsel for the defense of J.C. Loftus, a recently-hired Kern County Land Company employee who was jailed on charges of murdering Joseph Lafferty (Chicago Daily Tribune, Sep 8, 1910). Mrs. Loftus was probably in Bakersfield monitoring the trial.

<sup>82</sup> "HA Jastro lives here with his widowed daughter, Mrs. May Greer." Wallace Melvin Morgan. *History of Kern County, California*. Los Angeles, CA: Historic Record Company, 1914



February sixth for New York, where she will join a party of eastern friends and make a tour of the world. Their journeys will extend over about four or six months and will include Italy, Greece, Egypt, and a tour of the Orient. Mrs. Greer is anticipating a delightful trip."<sup>83</sup>

Mae was in San Francisco in the summer of 1913, but that fall she was back in Bakersfield.<sup>84</sup> H.A. Jastro's friend Alfred Harrell, owner of the Bakersfield Californian, may have talked about Jastro's daughter and her life in San Francisco, but if Harrell had information about her, he would not have printed it.<sup>85</sup> On Sunday, January 4, 1914 at the Jastro home at Nineteenth and B Street, Mae Greer and Max I. Koshland were married. "It was a simple ceremony," wrote the newspaper, "performed by Superior Judge Howard A. Peairs, Mr. Jastro giving his daughter away. The bride and groom were unattended, only relatives witnessing the wedding. The newly married couple left on an early afternoon train for a wedding trip, and after spending a fortnight at Del Monte and other coast points, they will make San Francisco their home."<sup>86</sup> Max was a wealthy San Francisco broker and the son of California wool merchant Marcus Simon Koshland.<sup>87</sup> The next day Henry Jastro departed for a National Cattle Raisers Association meeting at Tucson, Arizona.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 26, 1912. Jastro accompanied Mae to San Francisco. She departed Feb 6. Bakersfield Californian, Feb 2, 1912

<sup>84</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Sep 22, 1913

<sup>85</sup> "The Californian has passed into the hands of the democracy and will be its organ. E.M. Roberts to furnish capital, Alfred Harrell will be majordomo, and Mr. Jastro will have an eye out for business." Morning Echo, Sep 4, 1896, as cited in the Morning Echo of Sep 4, 1910. Wallace Melvin Morgan, History of Kern County, California, p 240. No copies of the 1896 Morning Echo are extant.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 5, 1914; Kern County Marriages, p 116, Jan 5, 1914

<sup>88</sup> Los Angeles Times, Jan 6, 1914

The Koshlands were notable in San Francisco social and business circles. In 1922 they resided at the opulent Palace Hotel,<sup>89</sup> were founding members of the San Francisco Opera, and in 1928 Max Koshland was Chairman of the San Francisco Stock Exchange. That October the Koshlands made a one day, round-trip airplane flight to the new airfield at Taft, California.<sup>90</sup>

In summer of 1937, 66 year-old Max I. Koshland had a heart attack while they were in Santa Barbara. Mae was at his bedside when he died.<sup>91</sup> For the next several months Mae stayed with her sister, Carolyn Louise Chadbourn, at Montecito.<sup>92</sup>

### Carolyn Louise Jastro Chadbourne

Carolyn Louise's story is longer. On October 16, 1900 Henry Jastro caught the night train from Bakersfield to Los Angeles,<sup>93</sup> and the next day he attended a private, afternoon wedding at the home of his sister's daughter Sarah Harris Frank. There, Reverend Warren F. Day solemnized the union of Carolyn Louise Jastro and Merriam Otis Chadbourne.<sup>94</sup> A notice in the Daily Californian mistakenly identified Chadbourne as "Melvin Chadwin" of Los Angeles, but the rest of the write up was

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<sup>89</sup> *Who's Who among the Women of California*, p 487 (1922). The Palace Hotel built in 1875 was considered the largest, most luxurious and costly hotel in the world. It burned in the San Francisco earthquake of April 18, 1906 and reopened in 1909.

<sup>90</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Oct 13, 1928. The Koshlands had oil investments in Kern County. In 1933 they stayed at the Padre Hotel in Bakersfield. Bakersfield Californian, Feb 11, 1933. As described later, her sister's son was in the airplane business.

<sup>91</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jun 23, 1937. Max Koshland was buried at Santa Barbara.

<sup>92</sup> May Koshland, 81, died on July 11, 1963 after an extended illness at Santa Barbara. Private services were held at Bakersfield, and interment was at the Jastro family mausoleum in Union Cemetery. Bakersfield Californian, Jul 13, 1963

<sup>93</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Oct 16, 1900

<sup>94</sup> Los Angeles Times, Oct 18, 1900, p I-5

correct. He was was a long-time Southern California resident and "wealthy mining man with large interests in New Mexico and Arizona."<sup>95</sup>

By December 1915 Carolyn Louise and Chadbourne were divorced, but when they lived in New Mexico they had son Henry Alexander Chadbourne and daughter Carolyn. She lived most of her life with her mother in her Arroyico Lane home in Montecito. Carolyn Louise died in Montecito in 1954. <sup>96</sup> Carolyn had no children.<sup>97</sup>

### Henry Jastro's grandson, Jack Chadbourne

On May 27, 1907 Henry Alexander Jastro Chadbourne was born at Albuquerque, New Mexico. Jack went to Columbia and Princeton Universities, although he may not have graduated from either institution.<sup>98</sup> In 1927 he married Eunice Putnam who was daughter of Israel Putnam, the owner of Putnam Publishing Company, New York.<sup>99</sup> Jack and Eunice Chadbourne had a son, born in 1928 at Santa Barbara.<sup>100</sup> That year, twenty-one year-old Jack Chadbourne founded a California flying service at Carpentaria airfield, and in 1933 he was president of Aircraft Sales Company and a co-partner of Donze Air Space Services.<sup>101</sup> His financial

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<sup>95</sup> Not mentioned was Chadbourne's father F.S. Chadbourne, who owned F.S. Chadbourne & Company Furniture and Bedding of San Francisco.

<sup>96</sup> She died Dec 29, 1954 at age 74

<sup>97</sup> Carolyn Chadbourne, 84, had no children. She died in Santa Barbara Feb 9, 1994.

<sup>98</sup> Los Angeles Times, Jan 12, 1933

<sup>99</sup> Married Jan 18, 1927

<sup>100</sup> Born Feb 10, 1928

<sup>101</sup> *Pied Cow*, Summer 1997, ISSN 0741-0360, Vol. 14, No. 2, Issue 29, (publication of the Chadbourne Association, HCR 77, Box 8350, Chadbourne's Ridge, North Waterborough, MN 04061. <http://chadbourne.org/piedcows>). In 1933 Jack married Margaret Reeve Morrow of New York. The marriage lasted a few months. A year later he married Patricia C. Cram, also of New York. No children came of those marriages.

adviser was his aunt's husband, Max I. Koshland.<sup>102</sup> Jack and Eunice Chadbourne divorced in July 1929. Eunice was awarded custody of their son, and she and her son moved east.

In June 1940 "Captain A.J. Chadbourne" identified as a "Santa Barbara sportsman" was home at midnight when he came down with a "nervous condition" that a newspaper said was brought on by an air crash of two years earlier while he was flying for the Chinese Government in Asia. According to the Bakersfield Californian, Jack earned \$1,500 a month flying for the Chinese air force, and that he also had piloted warplanes for Loyalists in Spain.<sup>103</sup> That account also said he had injured his back in a subsequent auto accident and could no longer fly.

Jack was taken to hospital, a fire broke out at his home, and a firefighter looking under a bed found the body of his twenty-five-year-old wife, Patricia. She had been smoking, and a jar of sleeping pills lay nearby.<sup>104</sup> In 1942 Jack was a \$21-a-month private in the US Army. He said, "I fought in the other wars for money, but I'm fighting in this one simply because I want to see the American way of life continued."<sup>105</sup>

In 1950 Los Angeles Times columnist Braven Dyer talked with Jack, then forty-three and identified as a Santa Barbara "sportsman", and asked him to name the best quarterback in professional football.<sup>106</sup> Jack's name does not appear again in newspapers until his mother's death in 1954.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Los Angeles Times, Sep 30, 1928

<sup>103</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 6, 1937, "San Francisco, Jan. 6. Enlistment of 100 fighting men to join the Spanish loyalist forces in their battle against insurgent armies was under way in San Francisco today. ... The group will join 500 volunteers in New York, known as the Debs Brigade. These in turn will join the International Brigade in Spain"

<sup>104</sup> Los Angeles Times, Jun 29, 1940

<sup>105</sup> Salt Lake City Tribune, Apr 30, 1942 (by AP wire from Merced, California Apr 29, 1942)

<sup>106</sup> Los Angeles Times, Nov 7, 1950

<sup>107</sup> Dec 29, 1954. An obituary of Carolyn Louise Chadbourne said her son and daughter, Jack and Carolyn, had been living with her at her home in Montecito.

Jack's name dropped out of US newspapers for six years. In 1969 he wrote, in Spanish, to a Spanish magazine about the Vietnam War and prefaced it with these words:

"Some years ago I wrote a letter to the magazine stating that the Americans would lose their war in Indochina, and that was in an era when the press regularly announced the prompt 'liquidation' of the Viet Cong. I based my prediction on my long residence in Asia before and after WWII, on my knowledge of the terrain of Indochina, on the nature of the F.N.L., and on my personal experience with the US military. I had in fact been an officer on MacArthur's general staff in Korea and had seen Vo Nguyen Giap in 1954, a little before Dien Bien Fu."<sup>108</sup>

Imogene Brower wrote in 2015:

"After Louise J. Chadbourne died, Jack went to Spain and eventually met Manuele Benitez, whom he married. Her influence is credited with ending his drinking. Carleton and I visited them once at their apartment in Madrid during the 1970s. He was now called Enrique. Jack was happy, sober, and later became baptized to please his wife. Jack's family was not religious. Neither May Koshland, Louise J. Chadbourne nor Carolyn had any religions affiliations or customs."<sup>109</sup>

### Great-Grandsons

As mention, Jack Chadbourne and Eunice Putnam divorced in 1929, and mother and son moved east. The name H.A. Chadbourne appears in the 1930 US Census for Manhattan—in the household of Frank Putnam. Eunice Putman Chadbourne remarried in 1937 and again in 1939, to Alfred Valentine Leaman III and then to Harry Van Faust Brower.<sup>110</sup> The 1954 probate of Carolyn Jastro Chadbourne's estate

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Jack's name did not appear in the probate of his sister's estate (Letter to Gilbert Peter Gia from Helen Rydell, Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society).

<sup>108</sup> Blanco y Negro (Madrid, Spain) Sep 13, 1969.

<sup>109</sup> Aug 6, 2015 letter to Gilbert Peter Gia from Imogene Brower (Mrs. Carleton Chadbourne Brower) of Sarasota, Florida-- Jack Chadbourn's daughter-in-law.

<sup>110</sup> East Hampton (New York) Star, Mar 30, 1939

named her brother's son. His surname was Brower, and probate also mentioned that he had two sons of his own.<sup>111</sup>

### Henry A. Jastro, Overview

By 1912 Jastro's influence over Kern County politics was begging to ebb.<sup>112</sup> That summer a Democratic aspirant for the board of supervisors named J.A. Waltman assailed Kern County Land Company for its long-time domination over Kern County politics. Windy, as the *Californian* called Waltman, accused Supervisor Jastro of being "the Czar and the equalizer of Land Company taxes for the last 20 years." But Jastro still had his supporter, they harangued Windy on the public sidewalk, "and sent him packing."<sup>113</sup> Another public challenge arose later that summer when an H.A. Ingalls accused Jastro of using his "... great and almost unlimited power of wealth and official position to prevent the development of this county." Ingalls described a run-in with Jastro:

"Nearly a year ago I went to the Board of Supervisors. Their representative, Mr. Jastro, was not present, and the rest of the board advised me to see him first. I approached his 'majesty' as he entered the courthouse, told him the desire of the suffering settlers for a road, and, reminding him of several former petitions having failed, the time had come when the road was a necessity, etc. He turned upon me with that wise, patronizing manner of his, stating that he knew all about the matter, and the settlers would get a road when he got ready to let them have it, or when it suited the interests of the Land Company."<sup>114</sup>

H.A. Jastro, about 1918

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<sup>111</sup> Letter to Gilbert P. Gia from Santa Barbara Genealogical Society. Henry Jastro's grandson, Carlton Brower, joined the US Foreign Service in 1956. Carlton had two sons. One received a PhD in Chemistry from the University of North Carolina and the other a PhD in Physics from Harvard University. (Letter of Aug 6, 2015 to Gilbert Peter Gia from Jack's daughter-in-law Imogene Brower (Mrs. Carleton Chadbourne Brower) of Sarasota, Florida)

<sup>112</sup> In 1912 an oil portrait of Jastro was hung in the new Kern County courthouse. (Morning Echo, Feb 28, 1912, p 34)

<sup>113</sup> Morning Echo, Jul 31, 1912, p 1, col 3

<sup>114</sup> Morning Echo, Aug 21, 1912, p 4, col 3-4

Jastro was reelected to the Board of Supervisors. In 1913 in response to criticism of Jastro and the Old Guard he stood for, Alfred Harrell wrote, "But as Mr. Jastro well says, the work of the county government is appreciated by the major number of citizens. That is attested by popular approval whenever the people have opportunity to express themselves at the polls, and despite daily misrepresentation, we have not the slightest doubt that the petty partisans will this year find that they have appealed in vain to a partisan spirit that does not exist."

<sup>115</sup>

In 1915 the Board of Supervisors moved to reelect Jastro as chairman, but before the vote was called, Jastro, then fifty-five, said,

"I want to say that my health now is not the best. As you know, I have been prevented from attending a number of meetings in the past, and my ill health may interfere in the future. However, if you think that I can serve you under these conditions, I shall interpose no objection."<sup>116</sup> After he was voted in, he responded, "I want to thank you very sincerely. Not many men have been honored with an office for as many terms as I have held the chairmanship of this board. This, I believe, is my twenty-first year as chairman of the board of supervisors of this county. I have tried to be absolutely fair. Many unjust assaults have been made against this board, but the pendulum is swinging back now, and people are coming to see that these attacks have not been made in good faith. As to the future, I promise that I shall do the best in my power for the interests of the county. Any mistakes that I may make will be of the head and not the heart."<sup>117</sup>

Not much later while out of the county he fell ill, but five months later, he was back to help supervisors sort out allegations against J.W. Jamison of extorting money from saloon men at Fellows. Ever-practical Jastro said in regard to recourse to the law, "You gentlemen of the board can do what you please with this application. I

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<sup>115</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Dec 6, 1913

<sup>116</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 4, 1915, p 8; City directories of 1913-1923 show Henry A. Jastro at 2229-19th Street.

<sup>117</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 4, 1915, p 8

don't want to put these men in a position where they might have to do crooked work to pay the levee upon them..."<sup>118</sup>

On the evening of March 4, 1916 the Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce and Kern County Board of Trade honored the Board of Supervisors and particularly Henry A. Jastro. At the high point of the evening, Col. E. M. Roberts toasted his friend. The Californian wrote,

"As Mr. Jastro stood ... the banqueters rose en mass and cheered and cheered again, nor would the applause be stilled as the official sought to make himself heard. And when later [*Jastro*] said, 'They may criticize us, but no man can point to a dollar that your Board has expended in your behalf for which you have not received 100 cents value,' the applause broke forth again, and when the chairman of 20 years had finished and resumed his seat, once again the banqueters rose en-mass and gave voice to their approval in prolonged applause."<sup>119</sup>

H.A. Jastro, center, about 1924<sup>120</sup>

Historian Lynn Hay Rudy wrote, "The Old Guard led by H.A. Jastro, Col. Roberts, and Alfred Harrell's Daily Californian finally became so corrupt it was overthrown by a reform faction of opposition Republicans. The Old Guard was done in by the new city charter of 1915."<sup>121</sup>

In 1915 the state of California disqualified the Kern County Grand Jury, and by the end of the year Superior Court Judge Farmer was replaced by Judge William H. Langdon of Stanislaus County. Citizens argued for the removal of Sheriff Dan Boone Newell to prevent him from seating a replacement Grand Jury. Reason? Because they said Newell had chosen people who were "recipients of favors from the Board of Supervisors, employees of the Kern County Land Company whose manager is H.A.

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<sup>118</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jul 9, 1915

<sup>119</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Mar 3, 1916

<sup>120</sup> Image courtesy of Sidney Allen, grandson of A.J. Crites

<sup>121</sup> Lynn Hay Rudy, *Granddad*, p 89



Jastro, chairman of the board” and that thirty percent of those on Newell’s list were saloon keepers and other Old Guard men. <sup>122</sup>

Jastro was increasingly criticized, and his declining health in 1916 caused him to step down as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors,<sup>123</sup> although for the next seven years he continued as general chairman of the Kern County Land Company. That position, however, did not shield him from Kern County courts.

During the time he was on the board of supervisors, it authorized \$12,000 in county highway funds for road equipment that was subsequently used by Southern Pacific for railroad work. In 1917 charges were brought against him for illegally benefiting the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, but the Grand Jury took up allegation, examined witnesses, and found Jastro blameless.<sup>124</sup>

The US entered WWI, Jastro sympathized with German-Americans, but his connection with influential business groups and his service on war-time boards removed any question about his loyalty.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, his commitment to the US war effort was above reproof. In 1917 he was appointed Kern County representative to the California Association of Practical Farmers, which was created to stabilize the nation's food supply.<sup>126</sup> He pledged the State Council of Defense to “do what was in his power” to aid agriculture, and he provided farmers along the Calloway and

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<sup>122</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Nov 8, 1915, p 6

<sup>123</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Dec 30, 1916, p 1, col 2-4

<sup>124</sup> Kern County Superior Court, Jan 1917. Criminal Case 1737

<sup>125</sup> Petroleum consultant Charles F. von Petersdorff who Jastro traveled with at the turn of the century admitted he accepted money from a German agent to investigate oil deposits in Mexico (Bakersfield Californian, May 11, 1897 as cited in Bakersfield Californian of May 11, 1937; Jan 14, 1918); In 1908 Jastro was a member of the singing group *Germania Maennerchor* organized by Franz Buckreus. Their program of Dec 29, 1908 is in the scrapbook entitled *Antique Bakersfield*, which is in the Jack Maguire Local History Room vault, Kern County Library, Bakersfield; In 1918 Buckreus was accused of sedition (Gilbert Peter Gia, *Sedition in Bakersfield, 1918*), [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com), [gilbertgia.com/articlePages/civRights1.html](http://gilbertgia.com/articlePages/civRights1.html).

<sup>126</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jun 11, 1917

Beardsley canals with access to Land Company. That action alone added 20,000 tons of corn to the nation's food supply.<sup>127</sup>

He remained active in Bakersfield business and social circles. In 1918 he was instrumental in erecting a two-story brick building at 1800-19<sup>th</sup> Street, today know as the Old Standard Oil building.<sup>128</sup> In 1920 Roland E. Dye who was Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America, thanked Jastro for making a week-end camp possible at the base of China Grade Bluffs.<sup>129</sup> In 1921 he was elected president of the California State Agriculture Board.<sup>130</sup>

Later in the year he had a heart attack. For months he convalesced in San Francisco, but in April 1923 he was back for dedication of the \$240,000 (\$4,000,000) Masonic Building on 19th Street.<sup>131</sup> Days later Jastro had another heart attack.<sup>132</sup> In August the seventy-one year-old met with his old friend California Governor Friend Richardson at a Sacramento Street Fair for a horseshoe-pitching contest.<sup>133</sup>

Jastro retired from the Kern County Land Company in early 1924,<sup>134</sup> but he did not rest. In January he was a debate judge at Kern County Union High School between Bakersfield Junior College and the University of Southern California.<sup>135</sup> In February, a

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jul 10, 1917

<sup>129</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 10, 1920, p 4. See "A History of Kern County Boy Scouting," gilbertgia.com/hist\_articles/community

<sup>130</sup> It was a post he had held twice in the past, the first time in 1907. Bakersfield Californian, Feb 11, 1921, pp 1, 3

<sup>131</sup> He spoke on the history of Masonry in Kern County. Bakersfield Californian, Apr 14, 1923.

<sup>132</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Apr 19, 1923

<sup>133</sup> Jastro and Gage became acquainted in the late 1860s when they worked for Phineas Banning at Los Angeles. Bakersfield Californian, Aug 28, 1923, p 7, c 2.

<sup>134</sup> Los Angeles Times, Feb 17, 1924, E15. Frank G. Munzer succeeded Jastro.

<sup>135</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Jan 30, 1924. "Resolved that Congress should have the power to nullify a decision of the Supreme Court by reenacting a law declared unconstitutional."

long-forgotten event in his life surfaced when he spoke before the Kern County Realty Board. He told them about signing a contract for Haggin & Carr in 1887 to supply Oakland mills with 5900 bales of cotton, and in order to fill that contract, he illegally hired African-American contract laborers from the South. "When he [Jastro] got up against government red tape on account of this imported labor, he solved his problems by setting fire to the cotton crop and burning it in the field." Jastro recalled he was fined \$5,000 and sentenced to six months in jail. "I still owe my country that six months. We found out we could raise good cotton, but labor conditions made the plan a failure."<sup>136</sup>

## The Last Day

On January 26, 1925, Jastro enjoyed his last day of good health walking and riding at his Bloomfield Ranch, and the next day "an old but disregarded ailment of the heart muscles manifested itself and from then on, though seemingly improved on occasions, recurring attacks so undermined his strength and sapped his vitality that within the last few days his family and close friends came to the realization that he could not recover."<sup>137</sup> In February he moved to San Francisco to convalesce at the Palace Hotel and be closer to specialists.<sup>138</sup> His daughter Mae was with him when he died on April 15.

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<sup>136</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Feb 15, 1925. The story recalls a time of slowing economic growth and increasing resistance to Chinese labor. In 1884 Haggin & Carr planted 1000 acres to cotton, and in a cost-saving move in November, Jastro sent F. M. Ownbey to South Carolina to hire black workers. Jastro said that untrained Chinese cotton-pickers, spoiled harvests. The local white labor force felt threatened by the new arrivals. After three trains of African-Americans had arrived, 130 families in all, "the White Citizens Committee convinced the Negroes that their wages were too low," and all but twelve families left the employee of Haggin & Carr for work elsewhere (*Inside Historic Kern*, Kern Co Historical Society, 1982, p 123; Morgan, *History of Kern County*, p 93); (*Historic Kern*, Journal of the Kern Co Historical Society, Sep 1976, as cited in *Inside Historic Kern*, 1982)

<sup>137</sup> Los Angeles Times, Apr 17, 1925, citing Bakersfield Californian, Apr 16, 1925

<sup>138</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Feb 11, 1921

H. A. Jastro, about 1922

What follows are some of Jastro's accomplishments: Mayor of Bakersfield, 1892-93;<sup>139</sup> trustee, Bakersfield Schools, 1893; chairman, Kern County Board of Supervisors, 1892-1916; member, Kern County Fair Grounds Association, 1892; member, state Democratic Central Committee; delegate, National Democratic Convention, 1900 and 1908; General Manager, Kern County Land Company, 1903-1924; director, Independent Oil Producers Agency, 1904; board member, McKittrick Extension Oil Company, 1905;<sup>140</sup> owner, Bakersfield theater, 1904-1905; controlling director, Southern Hotel Association, 1909; President, California State Board of Agriculture, 1908-1910; President, National Live Stock Association, 1908-1910 and 1912-1914;<sup>141</sup> director and secretary, Bakersfield Sandstone Brick,<sup>142</sup> Regent Ex-officio, University of California, 1909-1910 and 1921-1925; President, Security Trust Bank; chairman, Masonic Finance Building Committee, 1922; President, California State Fair; majority owner, Street Railway and Electric Lighting Company of Albuquerque, New Mexico; chairman, California Wood Industry, US War Industries Board, 1918; President, T.J. West Company, Kern County Cotton Compress, 1924.<sup>143</sup>

Jastro's funeral was held Saturday April 18, 1925 at Bakersfield Masonic Temple auditorium. Flowers arrived from California Governor Friend W. Richardson, Captain and Mrs. William H. McKittrick, federal employee John P. McLaughlin,<sup>144</sup> Board of Regents of the University of California, National Live Stock Association, California Cattlemen's Association, Pacific Southwest Trust and Savings Bank, Standard Oil Company, First National Bank of Los Angeles, Security Trust Company of Bakersfield, and Bakersfield and Taft Rotary and Kiwanis.

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<sup>139</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Apr 15, 1925, p 1, 5; Daily Californian, Oct 7, 1892; Jan 23, 1893. (Obituaries)

<sup>140</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Oct 15, 1905.

<sup>141</sup> Today known as National Cattlemen's Beef Association, [beefusa.org/](http://beefusa.org/)

<sup>142</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Nov 28, 1966, p 4a

<sup>143</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Sep 9, 1924, p 11

<sup>144</sup> Collector of US Internal Revenue, San Francisco

Pallbearers were banker Arthur S. Crites, merchant J.A. Hughes, Bakersfield Californian owner Alfred Harrell, businessman L.P. St Clair, investor William A. Howell, and contractor William J. Schultz. Honorary Pallbearers included General Manager of Kern County Land Company F.G. Munzer, Boy Scouts Chairman Charles Paine, F.H. Hillman of the State Board of Agriculture, Vice President of Standard Oil Robert Easton, Kern County investor and land owner Louis V. Olcese, oil investor H.I. Tupman, agriculture and oil investor Charles A. Barlow,<sup>145</sup> land-title expert/attorney A.T. Lightner, businessman Alphonse Weill, pipeline contractor H.J. Brandt, oilfield owner William W. Colm, and pharmacist Edward A. Baer.

The city's streets were virtually empty as Dr. Willis G. White of the Presbyterian Church delivered his eulogy. Arthur S. Crites spoke of Jastro's philanthropy: "His manifold deeds of kindness that are not generally known to the world are well-known to most of the lawyers in Bakersfield who had charge of probating wills of many unfortunate widows and orphans in this community."<sup>146</sup> The principal of Kern County Union High School, Herman A. Spindt, noted that Jastro "always took a sincere interest in the high school activities and manifested a special interest in our agricultural and vocational departments." Leigh H. Irvine, Secretary of the Kern County Chamber of Commerce, said Jastro "... did all in his power to suppress factionalism," and that he had a "willingness to forgive former foes."<sup>147</sup> Grand Master David J. Reese of Ventura conducted Masonic ritual,<sup>148</sup> and because Jastro also was a member of the Elks, that group also performed ritual.

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<sup>145</sup> Barlow succeeded Jastro as president of Bakersfield Cotton Compress Co. (Los Angeles Times, Apr 26, 1925)

<sup>146</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Apr 16, 1925. In 1898 H.A. Jastro and E.M. Roberts "started out to canvas the town to secure assistance" for the widow and orphans of the Baum family that had been burned out of its home. (Daily Californian, Apr 12, 1898)

<sup>147</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Apr 16, 1925. The public might have recalled an event of 20 years earlier when Jastro pardoned Harry Burns, an employee of the KCLC who stole a horse and tack and led a posse of vaqueros on a 65-mile chase. Jastro visited Burns in his cell, learned he was 17, and concluded that Burns' life would be ruined if he was prosecuted. Burns, from an "honorable and prosperous family," got a second chance. Los Angeles Times, May 2, 1905, by special correspondence from Bakersfield, May 1

<sup>148</sup> Los Angeles Times, Apr 19, 1925, p 12

The cortège to Union Cemetery was the longest in Bakersfield memory.<sup>149</sup> His remains were laid to rest next to the grave of his wife, and twelve uniformed officers of Frank S. Reynolds Post, American Legion fired the final salute. For the next ten days, town flags flew at half-mast.<sup>150</sup>

An academic survey of Kern County written five years after his death said, "Since then, no political boss has been apparent. He was good for the community for twenty-five years. He was an iron man, but his long, personal statement about water in the 1923 newspaper shows a man who knew how to make a good case to the public and who was aware of how to set aside his distractors."<sup>151</sup> A young contemporary of Jastro, Guy Hughes, expressed much the same: "On my rare visits to Bakersfield during the later years of his power, I would sometimes meet him. I was of no political significance, just a young cow man, with a few cows, striving to get ahead. H.A. Jastro would greet me by name, know my neighbors, asked as to their welfare, and how their cattle were doing. To the very last, he was a cow man, heart and soul."<sup>152</sup>

Jastro Bandstand, Jastro Park, Bakersfield (2006 photo, Gilbert Peter Gia)

In accordance with his will, in 1927 his daughters erected a bandstand at Jastro City Park between Truxtun and 18<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>153</sup> Above its facade are the words "From

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Los Angeles Times, Apr 17, 1925, citing Bakersfield Californian, Apr 16, 1925

<sup>151</sup> Bettie Daingerfield Anderson, *Survey of Kern County, California*. Columbia U., NY, 1932 [Beale Memorial Library]

<sup>152</sup> H. Guy Hughes, *Lynn's Valley Tales and Others*. Hall Letter Shop, Bakersfield, California, 1976.

<sup>153</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Apr 23, 1927. The bandstand, designed by Charles H. Biggar and built by Henry Eissler, is faced with Indiana limestone. Speakers at the dedication of May 1 were Mayor L.K. Stoner and Alfred Harrell, who characterized himself as "a life-long friend of Jastro." In 1902 Kern Co Land Company, through Jastro, offered the land to the city for a park, but it was not developed for several years. (Los Angeles Times, May 2, 1905).

Henry A. Jastro to the People of Bakersfield." The gift was acknowledged for years, but over time Bakersfield's memory faded.

In 1965 Mae Jastro Koshland's estate endowed \$7,600,000 (\$68,000,000) to the University of California in benefit of worthy students. Its name is Henry A. Jastro Scholarship in Agriculture. Ever-practical Henry Jastro would have approved that gift to posterity.

### How Jewish was Jastro?

Newspapers offer no convincing answer to that question. Although he was in Bakersfield by about 1868, his name never appeared in connection with Jewish religious life. A few observations: Jastro's parents were Jews. He married May Emiline Whalen Baker who was a gentile. Jastro's sister Minnik married Leopold Harris and maintained a Jewish household in Los Angeles. In summer 1887 Henry Jastro and Alphonse Weill (who was Jewish) traveled together to San Francisco.<sup>154</sup> In the 1890s Jastro and daughters vacationed at Catalina with a party made up of both Jews and gentiles from Bakersfield.<sup>155</sup> Bakersfield Jews had gathered to worship by at least 1893,<sup>156</sup> but it was not until 1920 that Bakersfield had a synagogue or meeting hall for Jews.<sup>157</sup> When Carolyn Louise Jastro attended the Marlborough School in mid-1890s she was a frequent visitor in the Jewish household of her cousin Rosa Adler. Carolyn Louise married a Christian, Merriam Chadbourne. In 1900 Jastro's other daughter, May, married William Greer, and in her second marriage, of 1914, she married Max Koshland. Both men were Jews. Jastro wrote in 1925, "I

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<sup>154</sup> Kern County Californian, Jul 23, 1887

<sup>155</sup> Los Angeles Times, Aug 16, 1894, Aug 4, 1895

<sup>156</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Sep 12, 1893

<sup>157</sup> Bakersfield Californian, Sep 23, 1920, "Woman's Club Building Sold, People of Jewish Faith to Establish Community Home Here."

herewith subscribe \$250 for the support of St. Paul's Church<sup>158</sup> and to meet the obligations of the parish for the year 1925." Jastro's will bequeathed \$5,000 to the Catholic Mercy Hospital of Bakersfield and \$1,000 each to three San Francisco orphan asylums --Catholic, Russian Orthodox, and Hebrew.<sup>159</sup> Newspaper articles mentioning him said nothing about his religious affiliation. Perhaps his observance was private.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Episcopal Church, Bakersfield. This note is in the Jastro probate file, Kern County Courthouse. From the Lynn Hay Rudy private, Bakersfield newspaper database: "June 2, 1892: Bondsmen for the new Methodist Episcopal Church south are Jastro, Blodget, B. A. Hayden and O. O. Mattson."

<sup>159</sup> In Judaism *tzedakah* [צדקה] refers to the religious obligation to do what is right and just, unlike philanthropy, which is voluntary. Tzedakah is performed regardless of one's financial standing.

<sup>160</sup> A surprise card party for Mrs. Alphonse Weill in 1898 brought together Mr. and Mrs. L.M. Dinkelspiel, Mr. and Mrs. A. Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. Levy, Mrs. Rosenfeld, Misses Williams, Gorham, McDougal, Messrs. E.R. Cole, Lucien Beer, Louis Strauss and H.A. Jastro. "The booby prize was awarded to Commodore Jastro." Daily Californian, Mar 18, 1898