

Three Brothers Bakery, A Houston Institution Built on the Heels of Refugees

BY NATALIE LERNER | PHOTOS COURTESY OF THREE BROTHER'S BAKERY

We are a country of immigrants, refugees, pioneers, and trail blazers. Our history is complex, but it is the diversity of our many backgrounds that makes this country what it is today. Specifically special to our local Houston history is the Jucker family. If it weren't for them, Houston might not have ever met the bagel, as they were the first to bring it here!

Coming to America for the Juckers (Sigmund, Sol, Max, and their older sister) meant opportunity to start anew. They were a family of bakers, best known for their over 100 year family establishment in Chrzanow, Poland. In 1932, Sigmund and Sol went to work at the bakery at the age of 10 due to a baker's strike. That strike is what led them to the foundation they needed to later carry on the family business, because by the time they were 19, in 1941, the family was sent to concentration camps. Their business in Poland came to a screeching halt.

Liberation Day came on May 8, 1945, and Sigmund had the honor of being the first boom take take a breath of freedom outside the camp gate. The four siblings were fortunate enough to survive.

"My Dad and his brothers actually had some money when they arrived in America, because they had been baking rye bread and selling it on the black market after the war when they were in a repatriation camp," shared Bobby Jucker. He continued, "In Houston, they started [baking] in a house and then they bought a bakery at Holman and LaBranch called Meshkat Bakery."

Sigmund, Sol, and Max renamed the bakery to Three Brothers Bakery.

"It had one parking space," explained Bobby. "I guess in their village people did not drive, so they did not think about it. Now when we look for a location, parking is the very first thing we

look for before we even look at a space."

In 1955, they moved to Almeda Street at Southmore, and later in 1960 to South Braeswood to follow their clientele. They eventually became a Houston institution for European style breads, pastries, and other delicious treats. It wasn't until 1963 that they bought their first mixer and hired an employee! Fast forward in time and they were ahead of the technology boom as one of the first bakeries in America with an online store!

They opened other locations like River Oaks and Sugar Land, which both later closed due to development.

In 2000, Bobby took over the bakery, and his wife, Janice, soon joined him. Together, they opened Washington Avenue off Shepherd and Kingsride Lane near Memorial City Mall.

"We have just started our 2nd 10 years at Memorial, and we gave it a big face lift. It is our first store to be renovated with all of our new branding elements. It's bright and sharp and is absolutely wonderful."

Three Brothers Bakery has operated continuously except when handling the effects of Tropical Storm Allison, Hurricane Ike, The 2015 Memorial Day floods, and Hurricane Harvey, but they always bounced back stronger than before, having gone on to rack up national accolades.

"Our pecan pie was named the 'Best Mail Order Pecan Pie America Has to Offer' by Country Living, and it was just recently featured on Good Morning America," Bobby proudly shared. He continued, "Our Key Lime Pie won the National Pie Championship in 2017 in its category in Florida—how about that! My favorite fruit pie is actually our Cherry Pie which made it into People StyleWatch."

Their Pumpecapple Piecake went viral on social media as the 2014



Sigmund, Sol, and Max Jucker



Pumpecapple Piecake



Pecan Pie



Bobby and Janice Jucker

hottest dessert in America, and has been featured on the Food Network, in Buzzfeed, and on the Travel Channel.

The accolades are far more extensive than what has been mentioned. It was through hard work and perseverance that any of those honors get to exist though.

The next time you sit down to enjoy a bagel, I urge you to remember this story. Remember the people that have paved the way for all of the great things you get to enjoy. Like the Juckers, so many people have worked hard to make America one of the sweetest places to be!



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