

The Bandera PROPHEET

March 24, 2023

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1912, Sam Kruger, Jewish immigrant and founder of Kruger Jewelry Company, married poet Fania Feldman in Fort Worth. Sam Kruger was born in Ukraine in 1882. He and his brother Julius immigrated to New York in 1904, then around 1907 moved to Texas. Sam brought his other relatives from Ukraine to New York and Fort Worth, where he trained them in the jewelry business. His nephews, Morris and William Zale, joined the family business and in 1912 moved to Wichita Falls and opened the Kruger Jewelry Company. In 1924, Kruger helped Morris Zale open what became the first Zale Jewelry Store, and eventually the Zale Jewelry Corporation.

The daughter of a rabbi, Fania Feldman was born in 1893 in Sevastopol and became a partisan in the political underground during the 1905 Russian revolution. The family emigrated to the United States three years later.

While her husband's business prospered, Fania Kruger blossomed as a poet and social activist. Her experiences in Russia inspired her poetry and were the basis for a lifelong commitment to human rights.

She published three collections of poetry, *Cossack Laughter* (1938), *The Tenth Jew* (1949), and *Selected Poems* (1973). She became known internationally and corresponded with a variety of writers and editors in literary circles.

She knew Langston Hughes well enough to trade poems with him and sent him her homemade strudel from time to time.