Jack M. Kaplan, co-founder of Liberty Rice Mill

Jack M. Kaplan was born in Poland, then a part of Russia, December 27, 1899, son of Milton and Ida Kaplan who were both natives of Poland.

His father died at a comparatively early age in his native land and, following his death, Jack M. Kaplan's widowed mother came to America in 1919 and settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She later married the Rev. Taylor, a Jewish Rabbi, and liked out her life in New York City.

Jack M. Kaplan passed his early boyhood in his native land and in 1914, at the age of 15, he came to America at the invitation of his uncle, Abrom Kaplan, who had attained a place of eminence as a pioneer in the rice industry and as a builder and developer of Southwest Louisiana.

Upon coming to America, Jack M. Kaplan landed at Galveston, Texas, and soon after his arrival, he entered St. Mary's Seminary at La Porte, Texas, where he continued his education in English for the following two years.

He then entered the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, where he continued his education and at the same time, during World War I, he was a member of the Students Army Training Corps.

With the signing of the Armistice in November, 1918, Jack Kaplan came to the town of Kaplan to be associated with his uncle, Abrom Kaplan.

Here, he began his career in the rice industry as a warehouseman, and, from the bottom up, he served his apprenticeship in all phases of the rice milling industry in association with A. Kaplan Industries.

In 1930, he was made manager of the Liberty Farms, Inc., another Abrom Kaplan investment consisting of 10,000 acres of land in Vermilion Parish, principally devoted to rice growing.

In 1934, Jack M. Kaplan and his brother-in-law, Abe Tartak, acquired the Liberty Feed Mill in Kaplan and converted it into what is now known as Liberty Rice Mill, Inc. The business was incorporated in 1934 by Jack M. Kaplan as President and Abe Tartak as Secretary and Treasurer.

In addition to his activities in the rice industry, Jack M. Kaplan was prominently connected with other phases of business life in Kaplan. He was Vice President and a member of the Board of Directors of the Vermilion Bank and Trust Company, which he helped to organize in 1958.

He was President of the Rene Implement Company, Inc. of Kaplan, (now known as Quality Equipment) a sales and service organization for John Deere quality farm equipment, in 1934.

Although he was not a "joiner", Jack M. Kaplan has had an important part in the development of Kaplan and Vermilion Parish and, through his varied business interests, he has contributed importantly to the economic life of this region during the years when this development had been the greatest.

He devoted himself closely to the operation of his various business interests and if he had a hobby, it was work. In religious work, he was a member and Vice President of the New Iberia Jewish Temple.

In 1958, Mr. Kaplan made a substantial contribution to the life of the city of Kaplan when he gave the site for a new 32 bed hospital. The hospital was named in memory of his uncle, the late Abrom Kaplan, founder of the City of Kaplan, and it was indeed a fitting tribute to this great leader and humanitarian.

On June 26, 1927, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Jack M. Kaplan married Libby Blum of Milwaukee. They were the parents of three children.

(1) Conrad M. Kaplan
(2) Beverly Ruth Kaplan
(3) Brian Howard Kaplan.