

ירשה

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# HERITAGE

The Journal of THE JEWISH ARCHIVES & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF EDMONTON & NORTHERN ALBERTA



U of A's  
first Jewish  
Woman Grad

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A Sunday  
Childhood at  
the Mac

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The Estrins of  
Shedrin

page 4

## DONATION CARDS

JAHSENA now has donation cards with historic pictures on them available for purchase. Mark your special simchas by sending a donation to JAHSENA. Contact the office for more details at: 489-2809.

## THE EDMONTON HEBREW ASSOCIATION

### 1912



The members of the Beth Israel Synagogue, circa early 1912.

Before the new Beth Israel Synagogue was completed in the fall of 1912, the members of the congregation met in the Odd Fellow's Hall. Prominent members of the community at that time included William "Boss" Diamond (centre front), who donated the land for the building. JAHSENA is currently trying to get the original synagogue building designated as a Historical Site on the Provincial Register of Historic Places.

JAHSENA Archives, donated by the Beth Israel Synagogue. Photo by Burke, Edmonton.



## From the Archivist's Desk...

by DEBBY SHOCTOR

# Archivist's Report 2004

Well, it's been another busy year at the Archives Office. We have survived two floods as well as a flood of donations. In total, we have received 36 Accessions to our collection this year, totalling approximately 25 metres of additional records, increasing our collection by 50%.

This past summer, we received a large donation from the Jewish Federation of Edmonton/Jewish Community Centre/United Jewish Appeal, which prompted us to annex a room in the Pool area for additional storage space. I cleaned, weeded, sorted, threw out and boxed all the records of these organisations which were lying in a mess at the bottom of the abandoned swimming pool, and will continue to work on them until they are in proper Archival shape.

A similar situation occurred with the Beth Israel Synagogue, whose records

have lain languishing in the garden shed in the parking lot since the move to the new building. After finally gaining access to them, unfortunately about half of them had to be thrown out, because of mould and infestation, but I managed to salvage the other half, and have sorted through them and boxed what I could. More remains to be done, but President Laurie Mozeson has graciously granted me permission to go into the building and see what else may be salvaged for storage at our Archives.

Another interesting development with regard to the Beth Israel: I was contacted through the help of Sondra Grosh, by the fellow who bought the old building on 116th Street, Robert Babee. He told me that he still had some inlaid marquetry wood panels, which used to decorate the bima, and asked me if I wanted them. I immediately said yes,

and Sondra and I went over there to retrieve them. We were treated to a tour of the newly renovated shul, which is now a large house. In addition, I have the panels in my possession, should we ever need them for restoration of the original synagogue on 95th St.

With regard to that project, we are still waiting to hear about another grant application for the funding of the Feasibility Study which needs to be done to determine whether the building is restorable or not. An initial probe of the building's siding this spring was promising: It showed that no stucco had been applied to the original brick, which was a relief. If that had been the case, the building would have been unrestorable. Board member Barry Zalmanowitz is still working on this project and hopes to have some more encouraging news for us soon.

*Continued on page 10*

# ירשה HERITAGE

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PRESIDENT  
DAN KAUFFMAN

ARCHIVIST & EDITOR  
DEBBY SHOCTOR

FOUNDING  
PRESIDENT  
URI ROSENZWEIG

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BARRY ZALMANOWITZ  
DR. ERIC SCHLOSS  
PETER OWEN  
JINI VOGEL

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
PAGEMASTER PUBLICATION  
SERVICES INC.

MAILING ADDRESS  
JAHSENA, 7200-156 St.,  
Edmonton, Alberta, T5R 1X3

Telephone (780) 489-2809

Fax (780) 481-1854

Email [jahsena@shaw.ca](mailto:jahsena@shaw.ca)

Website [www.jahsena.ca](http://www.jahsena.ca)

## DONATIONS

We have received the following donations:

To: Mr. & Mrs. Harry Nolan in honour of their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, from Evelyn Miller.

To: Clarice & Ted Bell in honour of their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, from Evelyn Miller.

To: Dan Kauffman, on the production of "From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered," with thanks from the Lutsky families.

## CORRECTION

In the last issue of Heritage/Yerusha, the picture of Lottie Wershof on pg. 5 was in fact that of Becky Bloomfield. We apologise for the error. Also, on pg. 6, it was said that Pearl Shnitka died at the age of 90, when in fact she was 79.

# THE OWEN FAMILY FONDS

BY DEBBY SHOCTOR, ARCHIVIST, JAHSENA

One of the most under-used fonds in our collection is the Peter Owen fonds. Peter is a member of our Board, and is a respected Edmonton lawyer and Jewish Community member, father and grandfather. But as a child, Peter's life could have taken a much different turn. If it hadn't been for the efforts of Edmonton Lawyer H.A. Friedman, this significant life could have been cut short in the fires of Nazi Germany. In fact, Peter's story has broader significance, for he was the only Jewish child let into Canada alone during World War II. His story is tacit evidence of the discriminatory immigration policies of the Canadian government during that period, and as such is highly significant, and worthy of study. Recently, Peter's story received some attention in the book by Linda Goyette and Carolina Roemmich, "Edmonton in Our Own Words," published in honour of Edmonton's 100th birthday.

Peter Owen was born Peter Offenbacher in Frankfurt, Germany in 1924. In 1937, Edmonton Lawyer Harry Friedman, a distant family friend, applied to Canadian Immigration for a permit to bring Peter to Canada. After a year of correspondence with various intermediaries, Mr. Owen was allowed into Canada by an Order-

In-Council, dictated by the federal cabinet, which allowed 22 people into Canada, including eight Jews. Peter Owen was the only Jewish child allowed to immigrate to Canada during the war period. Mr. Friedman had to post a \$1,000 bond to the Canadian government guaranteeing that Peter would complete his education, and not become a burden on the Canadian Government.

From an oral history interview with Peter: "About 1937, it became evident to us that something had to be done to get us out of Germany...The gates had shut all over the world. Finally in early 1938, a distant relative of my parents learned that it was possible to obtain an emigration visa to Bolivia. They applied, and were ready to leave, when suddenly some correspondence arrived from a place called Edmonton...I stayed behind with my aunt and her husband and three children.



H.A. Friedman. JAHSENA Archives.



Peter Owen in the Friedman garden circa 1940. JAHSENA Archives, donated by the Owen family.

My parents left in the summer of 1938 while I waited for word from Canada...Then came Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938. On the morning after Kristallnacht I hadn't heard of the events when I left for school. When I biked past the synagogue where I had had my bar mitzvah the year before, it was a smoking ruin... About 10 days before, my uncle had been arrested...Within a day or two, I received word that the visa to Canada had been granted...On December 3, I got on a ship by myself and sailed to America..."<sup>1</sup>

Peter traveled to Edmonton alone, but was met by friends of the Friedmans at every stop along the way. They reported back to Harry and Frances about Peter's progress across Canada. With the Friedman's help, Peter brought the rest of his family to Edmonton after the war.

Peter Owen graduated with an Arts degree from the University of Alberta in 1944 and served with the Royal Canadian Armored Corps until 1945. He continued on to graduate in law from the University of Alberta in 1948 and practiced law in Edmonton. He was made a Queen's Counsel in 1965. He was active in several community organizations, serving as vice-chairman of the Racing Commission, chairman of the University Hospital Board 1978-1985, president of the Edmonton

Art Gallery, and was the first secretary of the Edmonton Jewish Community Council. He served on the executive of the Edmonton Symphony Society and the Beth Shalom Synagogue. He also served on the board of the Jewish Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta, conducting oral history interviews.

Violet Rose was born in 1930, the daughter of Morris Rose, an amateur boxer who worked in the CNR telecommunications department, and Bella Nelson. In ca. 1953 Violet married Peter Owen. The Owens had four children, Susan (Owen Kagan), Tom, Dan, and Mia. Violet Owen is a well-known sculptor and artist in Edmonton. Susan became a metal sculptor, and created the new Holocaust memorial on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature.

The fonds OWE.99.1 consists of 3 cm of textual records, 22 photographs and 1 audio cassette of an oral history interview with Peter Owen. The materials were created by the Owen family of Edmonton from ca. 1910- 1999. The fonds consists of these series: 1. Histories (1999) The series consists of family histories of the Rose and Nelson family written by Violet Owen. 2. Personal (ca.1910- 1999) The series consists of correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs and other materials about the Owen family. 3. Peter Owen's Immigration (1937- 1944) The series consists of correspondence, financial documents, government documents and other materials relating to Peter Owen's immigration to Canada. The materials were donated by Peter Owen in 1999.

The material relating to Peter Owen's immigration to Canada is photocopied. It is unclear when the material was copied. It is believed that the original documents are held at the National Archives of Canada.

1. Excerpted from: "Edmonton: In Our Own Words," by Linda Goyette and Carolina Jakeway Roemmich. *Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004, pg. 301.*

## RAV ARIYEH YEHUDA LEIB ESTRIN:

*The Chief Rabbi*  
of SHEDRIN

Bernie Estrin. JAHSENA Archives, donated by Bernie Estrin.

BY BERNIE ESTRIN

Leib Estrin was a famous and well-respected Rabbi in White Russia. In 1880 he was sent by the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe to Shedrin, where he became the chief Rabbi (Rav Hair). Leib was the oldest son in his family. There are several references made to him. One prominent reference is in a Hebrew text entitled "Soldiers of Chabad."

According to letters going back and forth between Estrin and the Rebbe, Reb Estrin was still the chief rabbi in Shedrin in 1909 - almost 30 years after his appointment. A letter written in 1909 from the Lubavitcher

Rebbe to Reb Estrin has a salutation that reads "My honoured friend, famous teacher and God-fearing person..."

There is a direction given in the 24 Av 1909 letter to Estrin in which the Rebbe refers to the purchasing of the property where the Shedrin yeshiva will be built. "I would like to set the record straight, continues the Rebbe, "that I want you (Reb Estrin) to be in charge and head up this project to purchase the land for the yeshiva. It is your position, to expand the organization with the help of God."

The Rebbe added that, among other things, there must be a tea house built next

to the new yeshiva (presumably to warm the body and soul of yeshiva students due to the severity of the climate). All citizens of Shedrin and area should sign a letter (of support) and this would then be passed up for approval. The Rebbe was very exacting in his direction that people should put their money where their mouths are...

The articles in Soldiers of Chabad end with a notation that Reb Estrin was a "flavourful, Chasidic Jew ... a person one could turn to ... to schmooze with". He had an emotional side to him, but was a "get things done" kind of person who could take charge and could weather any storm.

## RAV HAIR ESTRIN'S FAMILY &amp; DESCENDENTS

Other information from the "Soldiers of Chabad" indicates that Reb Estrin had a son Moshe who was also a rabbi. Moshe's teacher was the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. We do not yet know if Rav Hair Estrin had any other children besides Moishe. We are unaware if Moshe married or had a family of his own.

CHAIM (HAIM)  
ESTRIN

Rav Hair Estrin had a younger brother by the name of Chaim who was a tailor in Kostakovich, guberne Chenigover. Chaim wrote Estrin with a backward

Russian letter "E". Chaim had several children. There was Shlomo, Herschel, Chaya (mother of Sarah Konikov-Estrin), Bayla (who became a Libin) and Ghitta. There was at least one more son, a nine-year-old boy who was kidnapped and recruited into the Russian army.

SHLOMO  
ESTRIN

Chaim's son Shlomo married Mariasha Lipkov. Shlomo Estrin (1865-1932) became a very learned Jew,



Shlomo Estrin. JAHSENA Archives, donated by Bernie Estrin.

in charge of the affairs of his town. He and Mariasha lived in Kraspolie, Russia. Kraspolie means "Red Field".

They came to Alberta in 1910 and homesteaded north of the Montefiore Colony for six years. They then moved to Calgary for two years. In 1920 Shlomo and Mariasha moved to Edmonton.

They had five children: Yehuda Leib (Louis), Harry (Herschel), Tsivia (Sophie), Benjamin (Ben) and Abraham (Abe).

Mariasha died and Shlomo married a widow from Edmonton by the name of Mrs. Gofsky. Mrs. Gofsky-Estrin's daughter Becky Gofsky married Abraham

Estrin. One of their children is Esther Starkman of Edmonton.

Reb Shlomo became a very prominent member of the Jewish community in Edmonton. He was described as "a catalyst of Yiddishkeit". Upon his death during Pesach of 1932 at the age of 67, a long article commemorating his life was published in the Yiddish papers "Israelite Press" and the "Jewish World". A full translation is available, but some of the highlights are included below:

*"Reb Shlomo came to Edmonton in 1920. He died and was taken away from us Pesach,*

1932 after a brief sickness. He made such an impression on the entire city of Edmonton. His funeral was the largest funeral in the history of our city (Edmonton) to date. Everyone came to give their last respects to their Rebbe, teacher and friend.

“Reb Shlomo Estrin was a humble man, not a fanatic. He could speak on Talmud and related topics for hours at a time. He knew the Talmud and the scriptures well. Reb Shlomo had an unbelievable memory; he remembered everything. He enjoyed when friends and congregants asked him questions ... he always knew the answers and could always quote the exact source of his information.

“Reb Shlomo was the sexton/gabbai of the Beth Israel Synagogue in Edmonton. He did everything needed in the synagogue and was often heard late into the evening chanting beautiful prayers and melodies.”

## LOUIS ESTRIN

Shlomo Estrin's oldest child was Ariyeh Yehuda Leib. He was born in 1886. Leib, known as Louis in English, was named after his great-uncle, the chief rabbi of Shedrin. Leib (Louis) was born in Kostikovich, gubernie Mogilev.

When Louis was getting ready to leave Russia, he asked his cousin Sara, who lived in another town, to go with him to Canada. Much of Louis' family, including his parents, were already in Alberta at that time.

However, Louis stayed behind to help his youngest brother Abe avoid being recruited into the Russian army (a 20-year posting). Louis helped get him out of Russia successfully, and Abe, via a circuitous route, arrived in New York, then made it into Canada and on to Calgary to join family there.

Louis and Sarah came to Canada via London, England where they were married.



Sarah and Leib Estrin, Julius and Jenny Hurtig, circa 1955. JAHSENA Archives, donated by Bernie Estrin.

They barely missed sailing on the ill-fated maiden voyage of the Titanic – Sarah developed an eye infection in England and wasn't allowed passage. They settled in Calgary, where many of their relatives – Libins and Estrins – already lived. Louis and Sarah were married for a second time in a double ceremony with Leib's sister Tsivia – who married Sam Segal.

Louis and Sarah lived in Calgary from 1911 till 1932; they then moved to Lethbridge, and later to Edmonton in about 1937. After that they also lived in Petaluma, California and then Vancouver.

Louis' primary career was that of a cattle and fur buyer. These endeavours took him travelling to many parts of Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan and the northern United States. Over the years, he was also in the grocery business and other enterprises. They had eight children: Fanny (Fay), Morris, Harry, Hyman, Esther, Marjorie, Aaron and Janet. This large family produced many grandchildren (21) and many more great grandchildren. Louis passed away in Vancouver, B.C. in 1968 at the age of 83, and Sarah passed away in Calgary, Alberta in 1985 at the age of 90.

## HYMAN ESTRIN

Louis' son Hyman was born in Calgary in 1919. There he met Goldy Hurtig, whose parents Julius and Jennie Hurtig arrived in Edmonton in 1912. Hyman and Goldy married in 1942. Together they operated Cosmo Cleaners at 9923 Whyte Avenue in Edmonton. The business later became known as “Mr. Suede - King of Guaranteed Leather Cleaning;” and was well known to all Edmontonians.

Their oldest son, David was born in 1945, followed by Bernard in 1949. David graduated from law at the University of Alberta, then moved to Toronto in the 1960s, where he remains. He is a widely recognized environmental lawyer - Canada's first. He is married to Pamela Margles and they have three children.

Bernard (Bernie) remained in Edmonton, working in the family business, then as general manager of Uncles at Large, then as Estrin Public Relations, and currently operates Home & Corporate Computer Tutor with his wife Gail. They have three children between them.

Hyman Estrin passed away in October 1999. Goldy now lives at Canterbury Court in Edmonton.



Goldy Hurtig and Hy Estrin on their wedding day, 1942. JAHSENA Archives, donated by Bernie Estrin.

# THANK YOU

Thank you to those of you who phoned in to complete the names of the men in the photograph on pg. 12. They are: Back: David Wiseman, Morris Weinlos, Max Weinlos, Fred Podersky, Norman Samuels, David Kline; Middle: Mr. Wyman, Burt Shubin, Danny Podersky, Bill Levine, Louis Podersky, Ben Liebovitz, unknown, Doc Goldsmith, Dave Garfin, Harry Bloomfield; Front: Aaron Kalensky, Henry Hurtig, Fred Swartz, Abraham Aaron. The setting was a golf tournament of B'nai Brith circa 1940.

# A SUNDAY CHILDHOOD AT THE MACDONALD

BY DR. ERIC SCHLOSS

*Dr. Schloss is a member of the JAHSENA Board of directors. He grew up in Camrose, Alberta, where his parents, Ann and Al, owned a store. His was the first bar mitzvah at the Beth Shalom Synagogue. Eric moved to Edmonton, where he attended the University of Alberta and was a member of the Sigma Alpha Mu Jewish fraternity. Both he and his brother Barry make their homes in Edmonton.*

My younger brother Barry and I spent much of our Sundays in the 1940s at the MacDonald Hotel. Our parents would pop us in the car and we would drive in from Camrose so that they could work with the clothing travellers who displayed in the sample rooms at the Mac.

First we would drop off our older sister at friends or relatives and proceed to the hotel. We were always settled in the quiet library directly opposite the main entrance with change in our tight breeches pockets for treats if necessary. We were well-equipped with our comic books (Batman, Superman, Captain Marvel, Blackhawk); occasional library books, such as *Bomba the Jungle Boy*, or *Dave Dawson and the RAF*; or sports magazines, as we liked to make lists of our favorite sports heroes. 1948 seemed the best year; it was an off year for the Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Cleveland Indians won the World Series over the Boston Braves (of pitching staff “Spahn, Sain and pray for rain”). The Edmonton Flyers won the Allan Cup (with the help of the



Barry, Alan and Eric Schloss, circa 1951.  
JAHSENA Archives,  
donated by Dr. Eric Schloss.

“receding hairline” of balding Kreller, Pringle and Smitten), and also our hometown Camrose Maroons won over the Edmonton Waterloo Mercurys to advance to the intermediate senior hockey final. Even the Calgary Stampeders won the Grey Cup prompting Edmonton to form the Eskimos and rejoin the league the next year.

In the very quiet and hushed library room with formal writing desks and rather stiff, uncomfortable formal chairs and sofas, the huge Fathers of Confederation picture on the wall seemed to stare at us every time we looked up from our books,

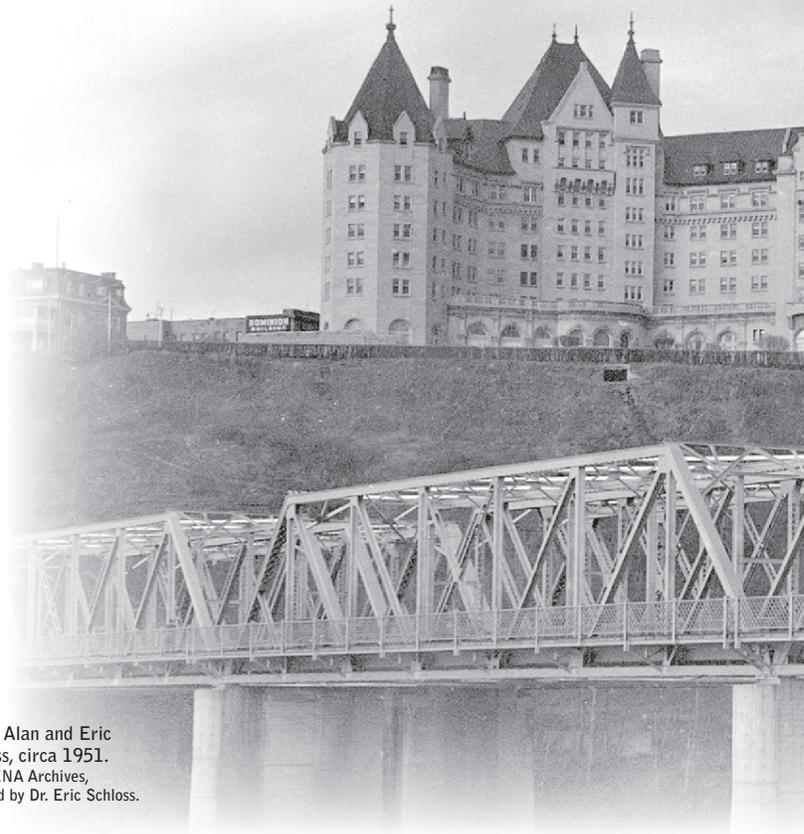
and be saying sternly “don’t you two dare have a scrap.” The men (only Fathers of Confederation, no Mothers) looked ancient to a child’s eye (and probably still do).

The hotel staff was always friendly to us including the uniformed chief bell hop, Johnny (who many years later became my patient and liked to reminisce about us and the good times at the Mac). His assistant Mike (who always looked our age or younger), and the courteous manager Mr. Van Alstine, usually at the front desk in the lobby.

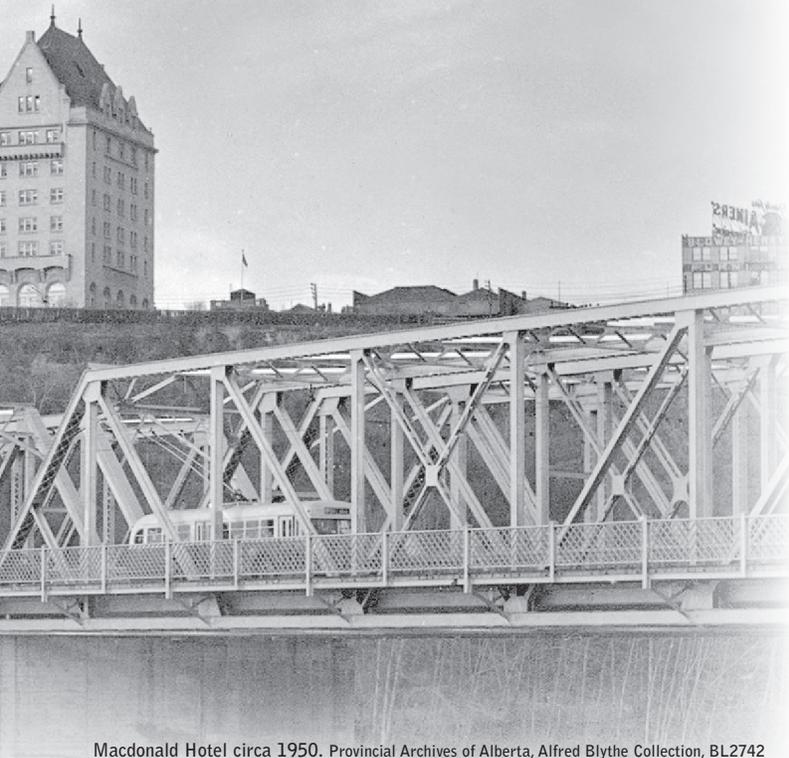
We would take breaks to explore the hotel, fascinated with the

elevators (they had not yet been seen in Camrose) and asking the elevator operators to take us for rides. The terrace was fun to see what we could identify in the river valley but alas was closed off in winter. We also spent time running around the Mezzanine floor and playing catch if no one saw us and were fascinated with the large buffalo head below the railing overlooking the lobby.

We often tried to find our parents in the sample rooms. The travellers (most of them from Montreal, Winnipeg and Toronto) crisscrossed Canada from the Maritimes to the West coast setting



# THE HOTEL



Macdonald Hotel circa 1950. Provincial Archives of Alberta, Alfred Blythe Collection, BL2742

up their display rooms inevitably in either the CN or CPR hotels and often had just arrived from Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary (even Lethbridge and Medicine Hat) and other cities. We grew to know most of the regulars, whether they were displaying ladies dresses or coats, men's suits, shoes, hats, belts, fur coats, and many other items. We were often greeted with cigar smoke in the rooms (our dad was also a culprit) and we often tried to play hide and seek behind the clothing racks. Local travellers also had more permanent display rooms such as Mr. William Freifeld, and Mr. George Snowden who

was memorable to a child for his very weak hand shake. We would also often see other buyers in the halls such as Mr. Ragosin and Mr. Goldstein from the Brody's stores in Wetaskiwin and Camrose, plus representatives of Edmonton stores on 101 street such as Walk-Rite's Bess Conn, our uncle Joe Samuels and his brother Ralph from Christie Grants and Mr. Henry Singer.

The cafeteria with its shiny metal cabinets, railings and chairs and formica tables was particularly memorable for the intimidating presence of the head chef Paul who never smiled and seemed to us to have a frozen face gazing at



Ann and Alan Schloss at Eric's Bar Mitzvah circa 1951. JAHSENA Archives. Photo donated by Dr. Eric Schloss.

us from his starched white uniform and tall chef's hat.

We would sometimes even dare to cross the street to gaze at the postage stamps in the window next to the Fisher and Burpee offices and hope to add a real find to our collection.

Occasionally we would all stay for dinner in the stately main dining room, usually seeing Mr. Harry Cohen from the Army & Navy store who lived in the hotel at his usual table along the wall. The tables were set with the exquisite heavy dishes, giant tureens, the famous heavy silverware with CNR logo and the starched white linen napkins, plus the impressive silver finger bowls.

Mrs. Sarah Fisher, worked in my dad's store and often accompanied my parents to the travellers and would usually arrange to meet her brother ("Senator" Ed Bloom) in the lobby. He owned The Nuthouse a few blocks away and would often bring treats. We would often also see Mr. Frank McCleavey, the well-known band leader for the hotel, in the lobby or sometimes if we were lucky, in rehearsal with his orchestra.

Years later our parents were famous for bringing their basset hound Sam with them to the hotel and sample rooms (the only dog allowed at that time). The hotel had also changed. "The new addition" from the early 1950s never had the same aura or glamour of the old Mac, and the design and decor simply never fit nor was accepted.

The Steakloft across the street with hosts Mitch Klimove and Corky Levine, became a more popular place to dine for hotel guests and the travellers.

Many of the traditions of the hotel remained however, such as the traditional throwing of the hotel's hard dinner rolls at the head table at University Banquets. The chefs continue to provide the hotel's famous and trademark dessert Baked Alaska. Banquet and dinner guests also had to be careful to keep the mickey of rye or bottle of wine hidden under the table before the liquor laws were finally updated.

Thankfully the gracious and memorable MacDonal Hotel was restored for the 1990s. My brother and I have been thinking of reliving our Sundays there ever since.

## ADDENDUM

The following names were inadvertently left out of the list of oral history tapes that can be found in the JAHSENA archives:

Bookhalter, Herschal;  
Garfunkel, Rachel; Kagan, Paul and Clara; Fratkin, Dr. Len; Goldberg, Harry; Kipnes, Irving; Lucky, Sam; Lyman, Leo; Mintz, Clara; Newhouse, Jack; Rosen, Goldie; Uram, Mark; Weisler, Marvin.

# MINNIE WERSHOF PHILLIPSON

*First Jewish Woman  
Graduate of the U of A*

BY PAULA E. KIRMAN

**M**innie Jennie Phillipson (née Wershof) was the first Jewish woman to graduate from the University of Alberta.

Born on March 14, 1902 in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania, Minnie was the fourth of five children born to Aaron and Ethel Wershof. Shortly after her birth the family emigrated to Canada, heading progressively west through the country from Montreal, ultimately ending up in Edmonton in 1915. Aaron Wershof was the first fully-trained Hebrew teacher at the Edmonton Talmud Torah, which opened just three years earlier.

According to Minnie's son, Dr. Eliot Phillipson, education has always been important in the family. "Despite being a man of limited financial means and an Orthodox Jew, to my grandfather (Aaron Wershof) education was a high priority," Dr. Phillipson explains. "By the time my mother graduated high school, her two older brothers (Eli and



Aaron Wershof, first principal of Talmud Torah, circa 1915. Provincial Archives of Alberta. Donated by Hy Baltzan.

Stanley Wershof) were already attending, or had graduated, from medical school, so there was 'precedent' in the family for a university education. Her older sister, Mary, did not pursue a university education, but by the time my mother finished high school (five years later), her parents were very supportive of her going on to university. Her younger brother, Max, also attended the University of Alberta, graduating in law. He went on to a very distinguished career in Canada's Department of External Affairs, including several ambassadorial appointments (to the United Nations in Geneva, to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and to Denmark)."

Minnie received a Bachelor of Arts in 1922 and a Masters of Arts in English Literature in 1924 from the University of Alberta. "She then attended so-called 'normal school' to obtain a teaching certificate. Her academic interests were clearly in English literature, including poetry, perhaps not surprising in view of her skills in writing both prose and poetry," Dr. Phillipson says.

After completing her education, Minnie became a teacher in a farming community in Northern Alberta. "She taught in a one-room school, teaching grades 1 to 11 in the same room. She lived with a farming family, and because she observed kashrut, she survived the winter largely on a diet of milk and eggs. Following the year of teaching, she returned to Edmonton and worked in the Provincial Department of Education, until she married my father," says Dr. Phillipson.



Minnie Wershof Phillipson. JAHSENA Archives.

On July 14, 1935 (at the age of 33) she married Lewis Phillipson, a fur dealer who came to Edmonton from Chicago around 1916 to go into business with his uncle Phillip Phillipson, one of the Edmonton Jewish community's earliest members.

Minnie passed along her love of education to her two children. Dr. Phillipson is a specialist in Respiratory Medicine, and is now a full professor in the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine.

His sister Judy has a Masters in Social Work, and lives in Montreal.

"Like her father, my mother was a very strong proponent of higher education. From the time of her graduation from university, she was an active member of the University Women's Club, which served as an advocacy and support group for women in university, and a source of continuing education for its members," Dr. Phillipson says.

In addition to her love of education, Minnie had a love of serving others in the Jewish community and beyond. She served as President of the Mother's Auxiliary of the Talmud Torah, and was on the Talmud Torah's board for a number of years. She was also active with Hadassah-WIZO and the Council of Jewish Women.

Queena Klein is the daughter of Minnie's oldest brother Eli, and is her last remaining relative in Edmonton. "She just devoted her life to helping people in the Jewish community, helping Jewish causes. It was her life, working for different organizations. She had this passion of being helpful to the people in the community," Klein says of her aunt.



Mrs. Ethel Wershof, circa 1939. Provincial Archives of Alberta. Donated by Mrs. Aaron Wershof.

Klein adds that Minnie's love for helping others extended beyond the Jewish community, especially to those who had fallen on hard times or visiting those who were ill or lonely. "Her interests were very broad. She was a great humanitarian and had a desire to help where she could. When someone asked for help, she helped," Klein says.

"When one of her close friends was convalescing from an illness, my mother sent him a get-well card and small gift,"

Dr. Phillipson tells. "With it, she included a thank-you note and stamped, addressed envelope to herself, and a note explaining to the friend that she did not want him to have to bother writing a thank-you note, so she was including one with her gift, and all he had to do was sign the note and seal and mail the envelope. The thank-you note was very funny. It read to the effect of 'Dear Minnie, I can't tell you how delighted I was to receive your card and gift, how it made me feel so much better, how thoughtful it was of you to send it, what a devoted friend you are, etc. etc.' Needless to say, the thank-you note did more for her friend's morale than did the get-well card and gift, which was the intention."

Despite her many accomplishments, Minnie remained humble. "She was one of these quiet people who didn't feel the need to let people know all the things she did," says Klein. "But she was a very witty person, someone who was ultra-talented. When she spoke, she could speak in poetry."

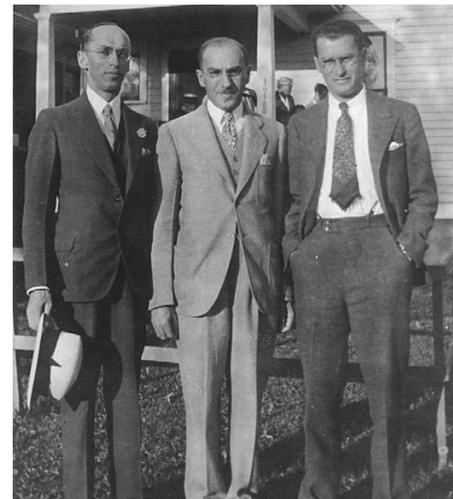
However, Dr. Phillipson says that Minnie was indeed aware of her trail-blazing efforts as the U of A's first Jewish woman graduate. "She

felt very comfortable with this 'pioneering' role, although she would not have considered herself a feminist by later standards," he says. "However, the irony of this Orthodox Jewish girl attending university was not lost on her. She loved to relate the fact that she enrolled in the only class in Hebrew studies available at the university, this being in St. Stephen's College, where she was the only woman in a class of 20 Christian divinity students."

Both Dr. Phillipson and Klein attest to the fact that Minnie was a wonderful mother, who was devoted to her children. "Her devotion was part of everything she did for us and with us, and the tremendous pride she took in our accomplishments," says Dr. Phillipson.

"I remember her goodness and kindness," says Klein. "When she walked into a room, people would come to her, because of how she emanated brightness."

Lewis Phillipson died in December of 1968 at the age of 71. Minnie Jennie Phillipson died on July 22, 2000 at the age of 98.



The Wershof Brothers, L-R Drs. Eli, Stanley and Max, circa 1934. Provincial Archives of Alberta. Donated by Mrs. Eli Wershof.

## At the JCC...

Currently on display at the JCC you will find an exhibit of items from our collection, most of which are plaques, textiles and other miscellaneous items which have found their way into the archives. Many archives have items in their collections such as these, items which fit into the gray area between museums and archives, but which are nonetheless interesting in and of themselves. Please stop by the JCC and view these items on display opposite the office in the glass display case.

## CONDOLENCES

The Board of Directors of JAHSENA would like to extend their condolences to the families of Esther Samuels and Ann Schloss, z'l.

## ARCHIVIST'S DESK

*Continued from page 2*

In August, we again used our display of the book at Heritage Days. Thanks to a matching grant from Jewish Federation, we were able to add six panels to it to round out the display to include more than just the first chapter.

Another major donation this year came from Maccabiah Canada Edmonton Section, thanks to Howie Sniderman, past President, who donated about ten banker's boxes of records. At this point, I would like to extend a general thank-you to all of our other donors and volunteers. Unfortunately, Peter Owen has put away his microphone this year, and will no longer be doing Oral History Interviews, but Brandy Graesser has agreed to carry on, and I have had offers from several other people to continue this project, as well as from Isabel Rodnunsky, who has volunteered to do some typing of summaries and transcripts of these tapes. Sam Frohlich has also generously volunteered to take on the task of translating the Yiddish items that come into the office.

Thanks to all those individuals who have contributed to our newsletters this year, we published three very full issues. We have a new free-lance writer, Paula Kirman, who has agreed to do some writing for us - you will have seen her article on "Abraham Shnitka, King's Printer," in the last issue. Thank you to all of our 146 members, all but a few of whom have paid their dues for this year.

Our relationship with the Archives Society of Alberta has continued to bear fruit. This year we received a grant from them which allowed us to hire Barbara Bushewsky Rosoff, who came in for a few months last winter to help scan documents for a project entitled: "Archives in the Classroom", which was created by the ASA to educate High School Students across Alberta on how to search and use archival

sources on line for research purposes. This particular project emphasized immigration, and so photos and documents from our collection were targeted for scanning which had to do with immigration to the City and Province. In total, Barbara scanned 120 documents and almost 400 photos, which can be viewed on the ASA databases Alberta In Word and Alberta In Sight at: [www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org). This is in addition to the 168 fonds-level descriptions from our collection, which can be found on the Archives Network of Alberta Database. The Archives in the Classroom project can also be accessed from the ASA website.

Currently on the ASA website, you can see a virtual exhibit on "Women Who Made a Difference", which includes photos and bios of five significant women from our community. As well, I am editing the next issue of the ASA newsletter, which has to do with "Faith-Based" archives in Alberta. The issue will be published next month.

We received approximately 25 research requests this year from researchers across the country. Some of the major areas of interest were, again, stories of immigration. Linda Goyette and her research assistant Carolina Roemmich were in quite a bit gathering material and photos for their books, "Kidmonton," and "Edmonton in Our Own Words," and its accompanying website: "Edmonton: A City Called Home," which can be viewed at: [www.edmontonhistory.ca](http://www.edmontonhistory.ca). You will see material from our collections in both of those projects. As well, we have received requests for our photos from sources far afield, who saw them on the internet. We are now actually receiving revenue from allowing use of these photos with permission.

During Edmonton's Centennial celebrations in October, we received many research requests from the Edmonton Journal and others regarding the history of the Jewish Community in our City, and some of our photos were

featured in the paper. As well, we were asked to contribute, along with Jewish Federation, a list of nominees for the "100 Edmontonians of the Century." Of the ten people we nominated, four were picked to receive an award during the Centennial Celebrations week, and their biographies were featured prominently in the newspaper, and will be included in a book by the committee.

I attended a conference of the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies in Winnipeg last May, during which I participated in a panel discussion on Canadian Jewish Archives, along with Janice Rosen of the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives in Montreal; Irma Penn of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada; and Lisa Singer of the Ontario Jewish Archives.

And, finally, our greatest achievement this year: the documentary. I spent several months this summer sharing the office with Reevan Dolgoy, whom we flew back from Samoa, thanks to a grant from Alberta Community Development. Together, he and Dan finished our documentary film, "From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered," which premiered at the Provincial Museum on August 29th. The film was very well received. We hope to take this film around to Jewish and Non-Jewish organizations for viewings and educational programs in the near future. I am very pleased to have been involved in the production of the film, and very proud of our organization for having completed it.

A couple of other notes, copies of the film will be available for sale at the end of the evening, in either VHS or DVD format. Also, we now have tribute cards for sale for special occasions, which feature photos from our collection; and we have less than 30 copies of our book left for sale, so get them while you can.

Thank you,  
-Debby Shoctor

ONLY  
**30**  
COPIES

ONLY 30 COPIES of our history book are left! YES! Only 30 copies of "The First Century of Jewish Life in Edmonton and Northern Alberta", by Uri Rosenzweig are left. At \$50 each, they are going fast, so get them before they are gone. When they're gone, they're gone!

## JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

*These items have recently found their way into the archives, and are available for research purposes:*

“Edmonton: In our Own Words” by Linda Goyette and Caroline Jakeway Roemmich. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004, 463 pgs.

“Naming Edmonton: From Ada to Zoie” City of Edmonton. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004, 421 pgs.

1m of textual records and artifacts from the Beth Israel Synagogue, donated courtesy of President Laurie Mozeson.

“A History of Alberta” by James G. MacGregor. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972. 335 pgs. Hardcover. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

“Edmonton: Gateway to the North” by John F. Gilpin. Windsor Publications, 1984. 320 pgs. Hardcover. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

“Lacombe: The First Century.” by the Lacombe and District Chamber of Commerce, 1982. 459 pgs. Hardcover. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

“Alberta: A Celebration.” by Wiebe, Savage and Radford. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1979. 208 pgs. Hardcover. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

“Alberta.” by Robin Langley Sommer. Vancouver: Whitecap Books, 1987. 128 pgs, Hardcover. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

“Edmonton: Secrets of the City.” by Charlene Rooke. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001. Softcover. Donated by Debby Shoctor.

“Canadian Jewish Directory.” Edited by Edmond Y. Lipsitz. Toronto: Canadian Friends of Boystown Jerusalem, 2001. Softcover.

“A City Goes to War: A History of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment.” Lieut. Col. G.R. Stevens, OBE. Brampton: Charters Publishing Company, 1964. Hardcover. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

“Valour Remembered: Canada and the Second World War.” by Patricia Geisler. Government of Canada: Veterans Affairs, 1981. Donated by Dan Kauffman.

280 photographs of events in the Edmonton Jewish community, 2003, taken and donated by Neil Loomer of Edmonton Jewish Life.

“A Picture History of Alberta.” by Tony Cashman. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1979. 212 pgs. Hardcover.

Various items belonging to Rabbi Hyman and Cecil “Tiger” Goldstick, including photos of Rabbi Goldstick’s parents, an item of regalia presented to Rabbi Goldstick by the Lion’s club, Three sweaters belonging to Tiger Goldstick, a mug presented to Tiger Goldstick, and miscellaneous text. Donated by Helen Muskal-Cohen.

*The Jewish Archives & Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta is always looking for new donations. If you have any personal papers, photographs, negatives, books, audio-visual recordings or other items relating to the history of the Jewish community of Edmonton and Northern Alberta that you would like preserved for generations to come, please contact our office at (780) 489-2809.*

## Websites of Interest

### General

**[www.ataoc.ca](http://www.ataoc.ca)** Archives in the Classroom, Beta Archives Tutorial

**[www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org)** The Archives Society of Alberta; Archives in the Classroom

**[www.edmontonhistory.ca](http://www.edmontonhistory.ca)** Edmonton: A City Called Home and Kidmonton

**[www.ahdp.lib.ucalgary.ca](http://www.ahdp.lib.ucalgary.ca)** Alberta Heritage Digitization Project

**[www.glenbow.org](http://www.glenbow.org)** The Glenbow Museum and Archives, Calgary

**[www.archives.ca](http://www.archives.ca)** The National Library and Archives of Canada

**[www.imagescanada.ca](http://www.imagescanada.ca)** Images Canada

**[www.collectionscanada.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.ca)** Virtual Reference Canada

**[www.archivesphotos.edmonton.ca](http://www.archivesphotos.edmonton.ca)** City of Edmonton Archives

**[www.cain-rcia.ca](http://www.cain-rcia.ca)** Canadian Archival Information Network

**[www.cdncouncilarchives.ca](http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca)** Canadian Council of Archives

### Jewish Interest

**[www.yadvashem.org](http://www.yadvashem.org)** Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum and Archives

**[www.jahsena.ca](http://www.jahsena.ca)** The Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta

**[www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)** Jewish Genealogy Website

**[www.cvjma.ca](http://www.cvjma.ca)** The Canadian Virtual Jewish Museum and Archives

**[www.cjc.ca](http://www.cjc.ca)** The Canadian Jewish Congress Archives

**[www.jewishpubliclibrary.org](http://www.jewishpubliclibrary.org)** Montreal Jewish Public Library

**[www.nmajh.org](http://www.nmajh.org)** National Museum of American Jewish History

**[www.yiddishbookcentre.org](http://www.yiddishbookcentre.org)** The National Yiddish Book Centre

**[www.feduja.org](http://www.feduja.org)** Ontario Jewish Archives

**[www.ottawa.ujcfedweb.org](http://www.ottawa.ujcfedweb.org)** Ottawa Jewish Archives

**[www.theajc.ns.ca](http://www.theajc.ns.ca)** The Saint John Jewish Historical Society

**[www.americanjewisarchives.org](http://www.americanjewisarchives.org)** American Jewish Archives

**[www.jwa.org](http://www.jwa.org)** The Jewish Women’s Archives

**[www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism/](http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism/)** Women in Judaism

**[www.librarybrandeis.edu](http://www.librarybrandeis.edu)** Brandeis University Library

**[www.edmontonbethisrael.org](http://www.edmontonbethisrael.org)** Edmonton Beth Israel Synagogue

**[www.jewish-food.org](http://www.jewish-food.org)** Classic Jewish food recipe archive

**[www.huc.edu/libraries/](http://www.huc.edu/libraries/)** Hebrew Union College Library

## ON THE WEB...

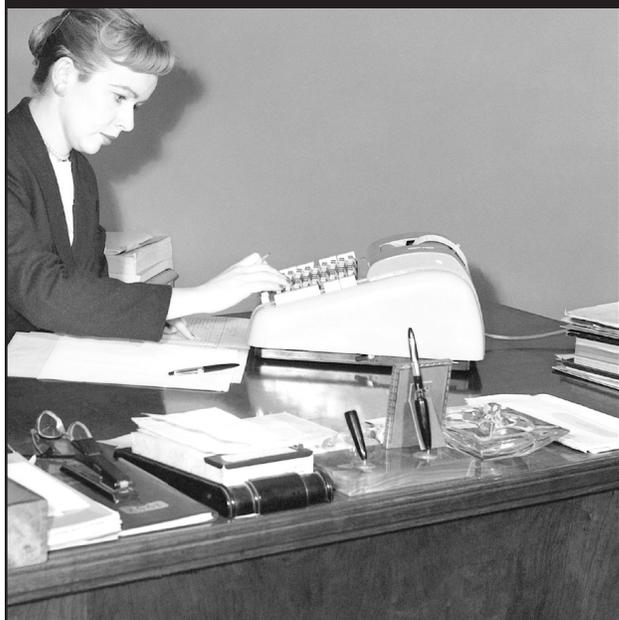
Our archives is now a full-fledged member of the Archives Network of Alberta Database. If you visit the Archives Society of Alberta website at **[www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org)**, you will find the holdings of JAHSENA listed on their database. We currently have over 168 fonds-level descriptions listed on their searchable fonds-level database. In Alberta In Sight, the photo database, we have over 500 photos digitized. In Alberta in Word, there are over 400 digitized documents. We are also participating in a virtual exhibit in honour of Archives Week, Oct 3-9, entitled: “Women Who Made a Difference”. While you’re on the web, check out our own site at [www.jahsena.ca](http://www.jahsena.ca). And please note that our email address is: **[jahsena@shaw.ca](mailto:jahsena@shaw.ca)**. Starting on September 30, go to **[www.edmontonhistory.ca](http://www.edmontonhistory.ca)** to see the new website launched by the City of Edmonton in honour of its 100th anniversary on Oct. 8. Both the books and the website feature stories and pictures of our Jewish community history.

## "FROM PEDLARS TO PATRIARCHS: A LEGACY REMEMBERED"

The Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta is taking orders for copies of "From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered," its documentary film about the history of the Edmonton Jewish Community. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this film, it is available on VHS for \$12 or on DVD for \$18. Please contact the Archives office at 489-2809.

**ORDER  
YOUR  
COPY  
TODAY!**

**TO ORDER CALL  
489-2809**



## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We need volunteers in our office to identify photos, photocopy newspapers and clippings, do oral history summaries and transcripts and many other interesting tasks. Your own desk and all the coffee you can drink awaits you!

**Call Debby Shocter at 489-2809.**

## Help Us Preserve Our Past for the Future!

I (we) would like to become part of the continuing quest into our historical past by joining the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta in the category marked. A charitable receipt will be issued. Membership for other than individuals includes spouses. Membership includes an annual subscription to Heritage/ Yerusha, the Society's newsletter, published 3-4 times a year.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Payable to the Jewish Archives and  
Historical Society of Edmonton and  
Northern Alberta (JAHSENA).

- Patron \$100
- Benefactor \$50
- Donor \$36
- Individual \$18
- I am interested in serving as a volunteer.
- I have historical material that I would like to donate.  
Please call me.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please clip out and return to:

**JAHSENA 7200-156 St. Edmonton, Alberta T5R 1X3**

