

ירשה

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HERITAGE

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

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Beth Shalom Junior Choir

ca. 1952



Left to Right, Back to Front: Lesley Podersky, Esther Segal, Faye Osten, Trudy Singer, Bonny Moss, Unknown, Shawna ? Jaclyn Baltzan. Fourth Row: Unknown, Unknown, Mitch Grossman, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown, Heddy Wintraub, Minnie Newhouse. Third Row: Unknown, Judy Kline, Kramer, Keith Samuels, Ellen-Sue Osten, Unknown, Teresa Kline, Shelley Weisler. Second Row: Laurie Katzin, Jackie Mickelson, Unknown, Karen Gitter, Linda Moss, Michael Margolus, Unknown, Unknown. First Row: Unknown, Unknown, Danny Singer, Rhonda Galper, Rosalee Galper, Carol Ritch, Joel Sussman, Dworkin, Elaine Landa.

JAHSENA Archives, donated by Donna & Marvin Weisler. If you can name anyone else, please call the office at 780-489-2809.

AGM

November 19

Speaker

Dr. Bob Solomon

JCC

7:30 pm



From the Archivist's Desk...

by DEBBY SHOCTOR

Fall, 2009

Well, it's been a busy summer. We got lots of excellent feedback from Dr. Eric Schloss' article about Jews at the University of Alberta, and I hope you all enjoyed that. This issue we feature Jews in the Fur Trade, which I find fascinating, and hope you do to. Halfway through the summer, we had our annual Open House as part of the *Edmonton and District Historical Festival*, with our highest attendance ever, and we even managed to get a few new members.

In August, we had our first ever Field Trip to the *Little Synagogue on the Prairie* at Heritage Park in Calgary, which you can read about in this issue and see some pictures from that wonderful event. I hope it is the first of many.

We just learned that our films, "*From Pedlars to Patriarchs*," and "*Bittersweet Memories*," won the Edmonton Historical Board Recognition Award, and we will receive that at a ceremony on November 5th. Congratulations to Dan Kauffman for all your hard work on these two films.

We have had a student volunteer in the office over the summer, Noah Drisdell, who is studying at the University of Alberta and who has been

coming in weekly to perform various tasks around the office. Thanks also to Miriam Rabinovitch who came in to stuff envelopes for our membership drive. Thanks to her, the cheques are coming in fast and furious!

Don't forget to book your spot for our second *Family Writing Workshop* with Lil Blume on Sunday, November 1st from 1:00 to 4:30. This was an excellent program last February, and I am sure you won't want to miss the second part. Even if you missed the first part, you can attend and I am sure you will enjoy it.

Mark November 19th on your calendars for our AGM featuring Dr. Bob Solomon, who will speak about Yiddish culture and writing in Edmonton in addition to our regular business.

And please enjoy taking a look at our new virtual exhibit, "*Athletes in Archives*," on the ASA website at www.archivesalberta.org, which features five photos of Edmonton's Jewish Athletes.

Debby Shoctor

ירשה HERITAGE

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PRESIDENT
JINI VOGEL

ARCHIVIST & EDITOR
DEBBY SHOCTOR

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GRAPHIC DESIGN &
PRINTING
PAGEMASTER PUBLICATION
SERVICES INC.

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

Telephone 780-489-2809

Fax 780-481-1854

Email jahsena@shaw.ca

Website www.jahsena.ca

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

JAHSENA is holding its Annual General Meeting on November 19th at the JCC at 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker will be Dr. Bob Solomon. Everyone welcome.

The second instalment of our Family History Writing Workshop with Lil Blume will take place on Sunday, November 1st at the JCC, from 1-4:30 pm. This program was very well received last year. If you would like to participate, there will be a cover charge of \$10, which will include a kosher coffee break. To register, please call the office at 780-489-2809.

AWARDS & HONOURS

JAHSENA is the proud recipient of the Edmonton Historical Board's Historical Recognition Award for our two films, "From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered," and "Bittersweet Memories: The War Years." The Award will be presented to producer Dan Kauffman at a ceremony on November 5th, 2009, held at the McKay Avenue School at 7 pm. JAHSENA members are welcome to attend.

CORRECTIONS

In the article on Jews at the University of Alberta, several items of interest were left out: Dr. Ben Margolus got his Varsity letter in Tennis. Philip G. Kirman, son of Professor Joseph Kirman, won the Gold Medal in Science from the U of A in 1991, and is a partner in the law firm Weir Bowen.

In the Hillel photo on the front page, the unknown women are Margaret Katz and Rose Dolinko. Phyllis Bushinsky should be Bushewsky.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Debby:

The editor and a reporter from the *Red Deer Express* went out with me last night to look at the remains of the Blank's Lake Jewish Colony near Pine Lake.

We found the remnants of a number of the dwellings – mainly just the depressions left by the old cellars. We found where Rabbi Blank's cabin had stood – it is on a beautiful site overlooking what is now known as Blank's Lake.

There is another cluster of old dwelling houses near the site of the old Grassy Lake School. As we made our way down the trail to the site, our guide, Jim Vincent, pointed down another trail and said there was a small group of graves there.

Jim didn't know if this was a group of Native graves or whether it might be the Jewish Colony graveyard. Usually, Native graves are not in a cluster. Also, we all

agreed that given the conditions at the Jewish Colony, there must have been some loss of life amongst the colonists.

This second site is on the south western edge of the Colony area, whereas the Rabbi's cabin stood on the north eastern edge of the Colony.

We did not go up to the graves as we did not have permission of the landowner, but I plan to pursue the issue to see if I can find out anything more.

Hope all is well with you.

The article in your *Heritage* magazine has certainly caused lots of interest in the Pine Lake area. The director of Camp Riback has gone up to look at the Star of David on the Holy Trinity Anglican Church and to look over Blank's Lake.

Other people have been having numerous discussions about what they knew about the old Colony.

All the best.

Michael Dawe

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. We have received the following donations:

REFUAH SHALEMAH

To Norma Nozick, from the Board of JAHSENA.

SYMPATHY

To the family of David Panar, z'l, from Dan and Esther Kauffman.

To Harry Silverman and family on the death of Amelia Silverman, z'l, from the Board of JAHSENA.

To Abe Silverman and family on the death of Amelia Silverman, z'l, from Marshall & Debby Shoctor.

To Howard Davidow and family on the death of his mother-in-law, Rose Mons, z'l.

To Linda Goody and family on the death of Dan Goody, z'l, from Dan & Esther Kauffman, and from the JAHSENA Board.

To Brandy Graesser, on the death of her brother, Dan Goody, z'l, from Debby & Marshall Shoctor.

MAZEL TOV

To Mel Wyne, Congratulations on your 75th Birthday, from the JAHSENA Board.

A Warm, Fuzzy Feeling: Jews in the Fur Business

PAULA E. KIRMAN AND DEBBY SHOCTOR

The City of Edmonton, like much of Canada, was founded on the fur trade. Fort Edmonton was built here because of the excellent situation on the North Saskatchewan River and its proximity to fur trading routes and supplies. It only makes sense that early settlers in the area would be involved in the fur trade, and, as some of those early settlers were Jews, it also makes sense that some of them would



Abe Aaron, trading for furs with the Natives, ca. 1920. PAA 75-404/2.

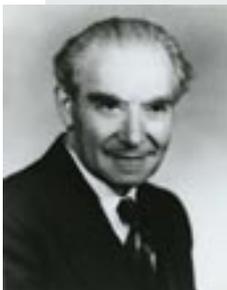
participate. In fact, many of these people were in the business in the “Old Country,” and simply translated their skills to this new territory and land of promise. None were trappers, but some were traders and buyers, and later, wholesalers, retailers, designers, and craftsmen.

THE TRADERS

Early fur traders included Abe Aaron,

Harry Soifer and Mr. Bondar, Mr. Shubin, Fred Ramelson, Fred Schwartz, Billy Levine and Shep Slutker in Edmonton, Ed and Elhanan Hanson, as well as Sam Kushner in Fort McMurray; Jacob Baltzan in Saskatchewan, Mr. Spaner in Grand Prairie, and Charles Aaron, Abe’s brother, in North Battleford. These adventurous individuals went into the hinterland to trade for furs with the Native Albertans

TREYDER ED



Elhanan Hanson
PA 75-159

The following is an excerpt from “Treyder Ed and Other Stories of the Canadian North,” written by Elhanan Hanson and published in 1957. Written in Yiddish, this excerpt was translated by Esther Leven in 1989. Ed Hanson, the “Treyder Ed” of the title, was Elhanan’s nephew, and the two of them traded

furs in Fort McMurray. Elhanan later opened a second-hand store in Edmonton. His son, Ralph Rosenberg was the Shammas at the Beth Israel Synagogue for many years, and recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

“Trader Ed was a man in his forties, over six feet tall, broad-shouldered and well-

built. From exposure to the frost and snow storms of the North, his face was tanned a copper colour and he looked like an Indian. In his North Country outfit with parka and moccasins or mukluks on his feet and his deliberate walk, it was hard to take him for a Jew.

“Trader Ed came to Western Canada from Russia after the Russian-Japanese War, together with his parents. He was about Bar Mitzvah age at that time. They had emigrated from a little town in the far reaches of White Russia to a small town in the vast Canadian West. Needless to say, they came penniless and his greenhorn father worked very hard to sustain his family of eight. Nehemiah was the eldest, but young as he was, he went to work at whatever he could find. He was strong and healthy and willing to do any job, no matter how hard, to earn

a dollar. His name, Nehemiah, was changed to Edward and then shortened to Ed.

“After years of different kinds of work an uncle [Elhanan] took him into his business. As he was really not suited for a city job, his uncle decided to open a trading post for him at Fort McMurray. Quiet Ed adapted easily to the primitive North. To deal with Indians and even with the white trappers did not require high pressure salesmanship. The far north made even the most talkative more silent and this suited Ed well.

“His uncle found him a suitable match, a mate suitable in all details – tall, healthy and the quiet type. Ed could not ask for a better ‘squaw’.

“The post prospered and after about eight years, his uncle turned over the business entirely to Ed. Trader Ed became well-known among the Indians and all the



Edmonton Raw Fur Merchants First Annual Luncheon, April 1, 1925, with Shep Slutker and Abe Aaron, 3rd and 4th on the left. PAA photo 69.325/2

living in the North Country, and as such, were just as much a part of the settling of the West as the French and Metis fur traders were before them. Elhanan Hanson even authored a book about these adventurers, "Treyder Ed," a kind of Yiddish version of Jack London's "Call of the Wild," but written entirely in Yiddish, and the only Yiddish book published by an Edmontonian. Jacob Baltzan wrote

trappers and traders of the far north...

"...just before Christmas they became busy with the arrival of the trappers, mostly Indian and some Eskimos. Each trapper came with his dog sled pulled by five or six dogs, and loaded with furs of the first half of the season's catch. Business was good. Ed, with his large new stock of goods, did a good trade for cross and red fox skins. There was an abundant supply of white Arctic foxes and a few blue Arctic foxes which were rare and sold for hundreds of dollars each. Besides the various fox skins, there was a large supply of first-class minks, rich martens, soft silky lynx and a great many wolverines, which were in demand at the time.

"There was a great need for this fur because of its use around the hoods of parkas; it was the only fur not to freeze up from

about his exploits in the Israelite Press, and his letters were later turned into an English language book by his children. (See sidebars).

Many Jews were members of the Edmonton Raw Fur Merchants Association, pictured below, including Abe Aaron, Fred Ramelson, and Shep Slutker.

Abraham Aaron was born in Lithuania and went to South Africa in the late

a person's breath in the cold air outdoors. This was particularly needed by the flyers of the newly developed aviation industry in the far North. In their small open airplanes, this fur around their hoods was a protection for their faces. For this reason the price of wolverines was very high.

"Some beaver was brought in, but not a great deal because of government controls. Muskrat came in by the thousands. Bear and wolf pelts were the cheapest. If not for the special price set by the government for each wolf in addition to the pelt, the trappers would not have been anxious to catch them. The trade was done in a primitive fashion. The trappers exchanged their pelts for merchandise from the trader, rarely for money...

"The loud curses and insults of the trappers added to the total chaos. Besides words, it often came to blows. One blamed

19th century. He immigrated to Canada about 1904, worked on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railroad, then homesteaded near Estevan, Saskatchewan. He married Julia Grausboard of Oxbow, Saskatchewan. Abe and Julia came to Edmonton about 1910. He became a well-known fur buyer and trader, first with Fred Ramelson and then on his own, buying furs and goods from the Natives, traders and storekeepers in Western Canada and at fur auctions in the East. He helped found the Edmonton Raw Fur Merchants Association along with Fred Schwartz and Billy Levine. He also bought furs for the Hudson's Bay Company in Montreal and New York. At one time, he was President of the Canadian Fur Buyer's Association. Often, he was called upon to testify in court when there were disputes as to where and when a fur pelt was caught.

Sam Kushner arrived in Fort McMurray in 1913. The heavy-set man with bushy eyebrows and a Lithuanian accent became the town's first Jewish resident. He came to Canada at the turn of the century, making his way west, and eventually settled in Edmonton. In the old country, his name

Continued on page 6

the other for not securing his dogs. Finally the commotion resolved itself more or less peacefully.

"This tumult went on for several weeks. One party of trappers came and another left until it ended. Once more quiet reigned. The fair was over. The warehouse was filled with a huge amount of packs of expensive furs worth thousands of dollars.

"Ed started to think about bringing his merchandise to the winter market in Edmonton, to the auction which drew merchants not only from Canada and the United States, but also from England. Edmonton was 700 miles away but 400 had to be covered by dog sled and another 200 over the open Lake Athabaska. This was a difficult and risky undertaking even for a hardened north country person like Ed, who knew the territory well..."

JEW IN THE FUR BUSINESS

Continued from page 5

actually meant “furrier,” and when he arrived in the West, he immersed himself in his namesake profession. From his store on Franklin Avenue, the Fort’s main street, Kushner bought and sold fur and other goods and provided a variety of services. His easy-going style and respect for the native peoples quickly won him many friends. He was one of the original founders of the Fort McMurray Board of Trade in 1914. He remained there until moving back to Edmonton in the mid-’40s, shortly before his death. “He was easy to get along with and always spoke of his love for the Indians,” recalled daughter-in-law Martha Kushner.

Ed Hanson (the “Treyder Ed” of Elchanan Hanson’s stories, and also his nephew and business partner) came to Fort McMurray in 1922 from Russia and launched a second-hand store, “Uncle Sam’s.” He took quickly to Northern culture and learned to speak six languages including Cree and Chipewyan. His store was a hotbed of activity as trappers and local residents gathered around the woodstove to trade stories. The comfort and trust the Native People placed in Hanson earned him the endearing Chipewyan nickname “Uchulah,” meaning “Rags.”



Elhanan Hanson in front of his store on Jasper Avenue. PAA 75-403. Donated by Mary Samuels.



Jewish Fur traders with Chief Shute, circa 1934. L-R, Abe Aaron, Ben Lauer, Chief Shute, Chaim Satanove. Seated: Louis Lauer, Charles Aaron. PAA Photo, donated by Hy Baltzan.75.404/5.

THE MERCHANTS

Jewish merchants dominated Edmonton’s fur business for a number of decades. From the 1950s through to the industry’s decline towards the mid- to late 1990s, most of the major fur stores were owned and operated by Jews. Two of the biggest stores were Regal Furs by Marcus and Lister Furs. Most of the fur stores were not only located close together downtown but also saw amicable relationships between the owners.

REGAL FURS BY MARCUS

The Marcus family has a long history of involvement in the fur business in Edmonton. “Regal Furs by Marcus was established by my late father, Allen Marcus and my late mother, Eva Marcus in 1954,” says son David Marcus.

When Allen Marcus was still a young teenager living in Winnipeg, he traveled by train to Trail, B.C. to live with his cousin, Jack Horlick, after his mother passed away. Horlick had an established fur business and taught Allen about the fur trade. After a couple of years, Allen moved to Montreal

which was central to the fur industry. While in Montreal he worked for several fur companies and traveled to New York City to attend the Sol Vogel School of Design. He achieved the designation of Master Furrier.

Allen then moved to Regina and worked for Morris Lexier Furs for a short while and also became involved in the local sports scene. When he first moved to Edmonton, he worked for Johnny Kryko of Western Furs. Meanwhile, his own father, David Marcus had moved to Calgary and opened up a General Store, Connaught Grocers. “On one of my dad’s many visits to Calgary to participate in sports, he had the fortune to meet two young, Jewish athletes from Edmonton - Bill and Aaron Furman. After an invitation to visit Edmonton, he met Bill and Aaron’s sister, Eva Furman - who eventually became my mother,” says David.

As their son tells it, upon return from their honeymoon in 1954, Allen and Eva immediately purchased a fur sewing machine and started a small company to do contract work for the local furriers.

The year before the coronation of Queen Elizabeth had taken place, which is why they chose to include the word “Regal” in the name of their business.

“The early years of the business were primarily devoted to manufacturing, altering and repairing fur coats for many well-known institutions, such as Eaton’s, Holt Renfrew, Swears and Wells, Johnston-Walker, Lawrence’s Department Store (Camrose), The Tog Shop (Yellowknife), several small-town ladies’ wear shops, Peter Straub (Switzerland), and George Tsruda (Japan),” says David.

Regal Furs was located on the second floor of the Thompson Bradburn Building – above the old Henry Singer’s – until the late 1960s. In the early ‘70s, Allen opened Marcus Furs Boutique in the King Edward Hotel.

“After a few years, he moved to Jasper Avenue at which stage he combined both Regal Furs and Marcus Furs Boutique into the Regal Furs by Marcus Company. This location housed a ground floor fur store, a cold storage vault in which to store furs over the summer months and a second floor fur factory for designing, manufacturing and servicing fur garments. Additionally, we were affiliated with the University of Alberta Fashion and Design Department where we were instrumental in developing their program as well as in facilitating student tours of our fur factory,” says David.

David himself became involved in the fur business through his father. “I went on to NAIT (Marketing Management) and then took a different direction and went north to Yellowknife. There I worked for Cominco Gold Mine. My Dad came up regularly to Yellowknife to buy raw fur and sell and service finished fur coats. It was my father’s good friend and long-time Yellowknife resident, Harold Glick, who one day said to me: “What the heck are you doing here? Go back south, find a nice Jewish girl, get married, have a family – your Dad has a good business”. So I spent over 20 years working with Mom and Dad to build the largest wholesale/retail



Mr. & Mrs. Sam Kushner in front of their store in Fort McMurray, JAHSENA Archives, donated by Martha Kushner.

fur company west of Winnipeg. My two brothers, Marty and Gary, worked in the business as well – each at different times and in different capacities – a true family business.”

Marcus Furs was involved in the community – both the Jewish community of Edmonton and beyond – through the work done by the business. “For many years, my dad’s company made and serviced the buffalo coats that the police department used to wear until lighter weight material became available. We also supplied the Mounties with their RCMP hats,” says David.

He adds that, “Over the years, Regal Furs participated in many fashion shows for various charities. Most memorable were the Hadassah Bazaar years. Alongside the fashion shows, we always set up a booth where there was a demonstration on the making of fur coats.”

An interesting aspect of the fur business for David’s father was dealing with the people up north. “During his many visits up north, my father befriended the priest in Inuvik. My dad volunteered to do a fashion show in Inuvik to raise money



Marcus Furs, donated by Dave Marcus. Photo taken by Kenneth McNeil, March 2, 1979.



Allan Marcus, donated by Dave Marcus.

for a new church. This was the first fur fashion show in the Northwest Territories to use local models and the proceeds went to the construction of the famed ‘Iglou Church.’”

The Marcus’ fur store closed in 1996. David lists the reasons as including “warmer winters, the economic downturn, and the advent of shopping malls and pedways. Although the anti-fur movement was a small factor in the downturn as well,

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JEW IN THE FUR BUSINESS

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there was always a strong Edmonton Fur Association. This organization was instrumental in being the first in Canada to get an injunction against sidewalk picketers. My Dad was president of the Edmonton Fur Association at this time."

"The store owners often worked together rather than seeing each other as competition. "When it came to servicing fur coats, the fur store owners would often share materials. We were all members of the Edmonton Fur Association with the shared goal of promoting our industry," Marcus says.

Overall, Marcus views his family's involvement in the fur business as a positive part of their lives personally and in the broader community. "The furriers of Edmonton, along with many other Jewish businesses, were a vital and integral part of the downtown retail culture. My brothers and I were very fortunate to work alongside our parents, for so many years. We know that, because of their influence, we came away with a good business acumen and strong work ethics that we continue to use today."

LISTER FURS

Cindie (Lister) Thompson was born in Winnipeg, as were her father, mother,



Simon Lister, 1953. McDermid photo, JAHSENA Archives, donated by Cindy Lister Thompson.

and brother. Her father, Simon (Sy) Lister started in the fur business in the 1930s with Hurtig Furs, when he opened a store for them in Edmonton in 1938. The family moved to Edmonton in 1953, when Cindy was almost five, and Sy started his own business, Lister Furs, which lasted for 46 years, from 1953 until 1999.

Sy Lister immersed himself in the fur world to the point of being involved in every step of the business. He would often go north to purchase furs directly from the trappers. He bought and sold raw furs, often tanning them and manufacturing coats in his own store. "He knew enough about making furs to train some people as fur workers and oversee them as they made fur coats. About ten percent of stock was made in house," his son Phil explains.

Cindie worked at the businesses as a teenager doing clerical work, then moved onto the floor when she got older. "I moved away in '68 and came back in '72 and began to work a bit more on the floor. We had long-term staff who were with us many, many years. In 1990 we opened a store in West Edmonton Mall and stayed there for five years. I worked full time for a year and got it going." The WEM location, also called Lister Furs, closed in 1995.

Thompson's mother Ida also worked in the store, first in the factory then on the floor. In the mid '60s she became ill with

MS and began doing sewing. "In the later years she would come in just to get out and sit in the back just to keep company with the staff, who would buy her lunch and make sure she would get lots of attention. She was actually an integral part of the business for many years," says Thompson. Ida passed away in 2004.

Cindie is a retired teacher who worked in the store part time after her father's health started declining in 1983. She and her brother, Philip, eventually became the owners. "By the time I was in University my parents would go away for a while, and I would be there and run the store," says Philip. Despite his involvement in his parents' business, Philip chose not to pursue a career as a furrier, and instead went on to study Geology in University and eventually went into law. "I was never a salesperson. I made about three sales, and two of them cancelled," he says. However, during the summers, he would run Lister Furs' booth at the Edmonton Exhibition with his mother.

"We had very good staff, very loyal. My father was the sort of employer who went through a lot of employees, but if you lasted six months with him you'd be there 16 years," Philip explains.

After Thompson's parents became ill and her father passed away on December 30, 1989, the family ran it for another 10 years, but then decided to sell the business. Changes in the economy and demand also fueled the decision. Lister Furs closed approximately a year after the new owners took over, in 2000.

At one time, there were six Jewish furriers along Jasper Avenue. Like Dave Marcus, Cindie Thompson emphasizes the relationships between the various Jewish furriers. "When Allen Marcus moved to Edmonton he worked for my father," she says. "We were friendly with the other furriers and when things got tough in the late '80s, we started meetings with the other furriers. My father was very friendly with other furriers like Morris Furs (which still exists). We were competitive but we



Simon and Ida Lister in their store on Jasper Avenue, 1970. JAHSENA Archives, donated by Cindy Lister Thompson.

Jacob Baltzan: Pioneer Farmer and Fur Trader

This excerpt is taken from Jacob Baltzan's book of memoirs. In it he describes trading for furs on the prairies at the turn of the century. Born in Bessarabia in 1873, Jacob Baltzan fled to New York in 1904 after serving in the Czar's army. He subsequently moved to the Jewish colony in Lipton, Saskatchewan, and later to Edmonton, in 1911. He was one of the founders of the Edmonton Talmud Torah and Beth Israel Synagogue. His wife Hinda (Nina) was the founder of the Talmud Torah Mothers' Auxiliary, and served as the Talmud Torah education committee chair from 1914 to 1939.

"Our Russian rubles disappeared quickly. We decided to continue to travel about buying furs to defray the deficit.

"I would take off Sunday night or Monday at daybreak using the light wagon or sled. I built a large strong box with a strong cover and fastened it securely to the sleigh or wagon. In it I placed the furs that I purchased. Once I had lost a sack of mink pelts and had been forced to retrace my steps for several miles to find it. Another time, while in a house dealing for furs, the dogs tore apart a sack of pelts and damaged several. The box was made to prevent such occurrences. I travelled about the whole week, returning Friday evening to unload, sort out the furs in our loft. The hides were kept in the granary as they had a strong odor. Saturday and Sunday I would spend at home with my wife and family and early Monday morning I'd be on the road again with a fresh span of horses...

"Though there were many obstacles, my travels were most interesting. One required many languages. I learned to converse in French, and even Indian (Cree dialect).

These people used to tell me the most interesting things about hunting animals. The beaver recognizes and senses danger and still is enticed into a trap set in his own home. These stories interested me...

"One bright sunny day as I was en route to the Touchwood Hills, I happened to spot what appeared to be a settlement that had hitherto escaped my notice...I cleaned out the settlement, filled the box and even had to put some in sacks.

"I learned of another settlement where I could buy more furs the following day. But what was I to do now? My cash was all gone. Here no one knows of cheques. It has to be cash only.

"I asked the storekeeper if he would accept my cheque? Without hesitation he replies politely that he doesn't really know me, and he was right!...

"That Friday night I arrived in Lipton. My brother confided in me that "rats" (muskrats) had suddenly jumped to twenty cents. Previous to this, we had paid ten cents or three for a quarter, and he wondered whether I knew where any were available. He expected Mr. Cohen that week, who would buy everything.

"I advised him that an Indian storekeeper on the reserve near Balacarras had 3000 rats. He would not sell for under twelve cents. I decided to go before daybreak and if no pedlars had appeared before then, I would buy them for sure. I cautioned that I had to deal carefully as he was not to be trusted. And also, you need cash. My brother immediately canvassed

all the stores – Jewish and non-Jewish – and obtained five hundred dollars. We then rode home. With his light sled and spirited horse, we arrived on our farm within an hour. Our family awaited us with a tremendous, delicious, Friday night supper, complete with liqueurs, and we were happy...

"Monday, before daybreak I was on my way. Since I was carrying money and it was still night, I took along Morris Abromovitch. At daybreak we arrived at the store. He wanted to know if I had come to buy rats, and I told him that I had come to purchase mink and others, but if he'd sell the rats for ten cents, I would buy them.

"He refused to deal. I bought mink, wolves, weasel and asked again, 'Well. What do you say about the rats?'

"He replied, 'Give me twelve cents and they're all yours.' They were already packed in bales ready to ship to St. Louis.

"I bought them. I counted the money for him, had him load the bales on the sleigh. At the same time, I had my man keep the horses primed and ready to go!"

From: Memoirs of a Pioneer Farmer in Western Canada at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century. Assembled from a series of his articles published in 1936-1937 in the Israelite Press, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Published privately in Toronto, Ontario, 1994. Letters originally published in Yiddish. This letter was translated by Sam Frohlich of Edmonton.



Jacob Baltzan,
JAHSENA Archives,
donated by the Edmonton
Jewish Community Council.

JEWES IN THE FUR BUSINESS

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were friendly with them and my father visited with them to talk. My father was a very jovial person with a great sense of humour."

Dave Marcus lists other important

Edmonton Jewish fur stores as Trute Furs (Jack Trute); Morris Furs (Morris and Rae Millmud); and, Hurtig Furs (Jack Hurtig and family from Winnipeg). Other furriers included Mr. Phillipson and Ed Synder. Some of the raw fur traders with whom Allen Marcus had business included Eugene Pechet (founder of the Mayfield

Inn), Harry Soifer, and Shep Slutker. Finally, some of the ladies wear establishments, for a period of time, also carried fur and leather garments such as Laura Lee Ladies' Wear (Ed Snyder) and Baudone's Ladies' Wear (Ken Samuels).

Today, the only fur store left with a Jewish connection is Morris Furs.

“Little Synagogue on the Prairie”

Captivates Edmonton Visitors

By JUDY GOLDSAND

The newest acquisition in Calgary's Heritage Park is a bright yellow restored pioneer synagogue. On Sunday, August 30, 2009, twenty-nine Edmontonians participated in a JAHSENA-sponsored bus trip to visit the Montefiore Institute, the first synagogue to be located in a Canadian historical venue. Irena Karshenbaum, president of the “Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society” and some of the LSPP Society Board members graciously welcomed the Edmonton guests and provided a private tour and personal accounts of the restoration process.

The original proposal of the LSPP Society to Calgary's Heritage Park was to construct a replica of a synagogue that was known to have existed in the Montefiore Colony in southeastern Alberta. Emanuel Cohen, a Calgarian who had been born on a ranch in that region, says he had been on the trail of the Montefiore Synagogue for 15 years ever since he wrote a paper on the Montefiore Colony for the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta. Finally, after delving into much research, some of it collected in the 1970s by Edmontonian Reevan Dolgoy, he located the building in the town of Hanna and arranged for its purchase by the LSPP Society which, under Karshenbaum's leadership, had raised a million dollars for the project. It was moved by truck to Calgary and restoration began under the direction of Trudy Cowan, a



President Irena Karshenbaum talks to the crowd.



Books donated to the Institute, many from JAHSENA.



A docent explains the Torah scroll to a young visitor.



The Little Synagogue.

heritage and museum consultant.

The Synagogue was built in 1913 in the southeast Alberta farming community now known as Sibbald, which was the center of the Montefiore Colony of Jewish immigrants who had settled there in 1910. The building served about 30 Jewish families as their synagogue, school and community centre until the harsh farming conditions of the Great Depression forced most residents to move elsewhere. In about 1937, the building was sold to a family for \$200, says Karshenbaum. It was moved to Hanna, a nearby town, and transformed into a two-bedroom house which remained in the same family for almost 70 years.

The restored Montefiore Institute in Heritage Park features the original siding which was found relatively intact under the

stucco exterior of the house. Traces of yellow paint indicated the exterior color, which has been replicated. The original ceiling and floor have also been preserved. As evidence of an attached library, there are two bookcases full of pre-1927 Yiddish books, some of which were donated by JAHSENA, and two books on display stamped “Montefiore Free Hebrew Public Library.”

Sam and Margaret Frohlich of Edmonton donated the Aron Kodesh which has its own history. Sam was born on a farm in the Sonnenfeld Colony in Saskatchewan, ten miles north of the US Border. He remembers the Beth Jacob Synagogue there, built in 1911, as the center of Jewish community life. As in other colonies, most residents left during the Depression years. When Sam and Margaret visited the area in the 1960s,

Field Trip to "The Little Synagogue on the Prairie," August 30th, 2009. JAHSENA Archives, photos donated by Allan Devins, Jini Vogel and Debby Shoctor.



The participants in front of the bus.



Miriam Devins looks at the Torah Cover her daughter Caroline made.



LSPP Board Member Manny Cohen talks to the visitors.



The "Schoolroom"



Irena Karshenbaum and Jack Switzer address the visitors.



Sam Frohlich talks about the Ark he and Margaret donated.

Participants at lunch.



they found that the synagogue building was to be sold. They rescued the Ark and carried it on top of their car for 700 miles to Edmonton where it remained in their home used as a bookcase for siddurim and other religious artifacts until last year. They thought it was fitting for the Aron Kodesh to find a new home in the "Little Synagogue on the Prairie".



Soviet Jewry Records Arrangement and Description Project

The Ontario Jewish Archives is pleased to announce the completion of a year-long project to appraise, arrange and describe its records of the Canadian Jewish Congress, Committee for Soviet Jewry from 1967 to 1992.

Now cited as *Fonds 17, Series 3*, these records document the Toronto, Ontario and National campaigns by Canadian Jewry protesting against the treatment of Jews in the USSR and lobbying for their increased cultural and religious freedoms and their right of emigration from Russia to Israel and the West. This work was possible thanks to funding that we received

from the Canadian Council of Archives' NADP program.

The records consist of 4.5 metres of textual and photographic records. They are arranged into six sub-series, three further sub-sub-series, and 585 file-level RAD-compliant descriptions all of which have been input into the OJA's InMagic database. Over 1800 photographs have also been identified within the files. As well, the fonds level description has been submitted to ARCHEION and Archives Canada databases which are available on the Internet.

Completion of this project has created

a unique source of original documentary evidence about one of the most significant issues confronting the Canadian Jewish communities during the late twentieth century.

George Wharton coordinated this project. Donna Bernardo-Ceriz assisted him with the selection of the records and Simon Rogers completed most of the descriptions input into our database.

Researchers interested in accessing these records are invited to contact the OJA either by phone or e-mail: 416-635-2883 ext. 5170 or oja1@ujafed.org.

On Display

At the JCC...

Currently on display at the JCC you will find an exhibit of items pertaining to Jewish Weddings, including photographs from our collection. If you would like to donate a book, document or a piece of memorabilia to add to our collection, call 780-489-2809. Please stop by the JCC and view these items on display opposite the office in the glass display case.

At the Beth Israel...

Please check out the permanent display at the Beth Israel Synagogue, "Beth Israel: 100 Years of Memories." This display was put together by the Beth Israel Historical Committee, with help from JAHSENA, and highlights the history of Edmonton's oldest Jewish Institution through 108 photographs, and a chronology. In

addition, there is a temporary display of artifacts from the Beth Israel and its members.

At the Beth Shalom...

There is also a display in the Board Room of the Beth Shalom Synagogue, put together by Rabbi David Kunitz with help from JAHSENA. This display chronicles the 75-year history of Beth Shalom Synagogue.

On the Web...

Check out the Archives Society of Alberta Exhibit prepared for Archives Week 2009 (October 1-7), titled "Athletes in Archives", at www.archivesalberta.org. You will find five photos from our collection, one of which is featured in a new 2010 calendar. These calendars are available for purchase from our office for \$10.

Coming up this fall will be a new exhibit about Alberta Athletes and Sports in Alberta.

A new trunk about our own Peter Owen has been added to the "Letters from the Trunk" portion of the Archives Society of Alberta website. This is a virtual, on-line learning tool which teaches children how to use archives. It features, letters, photographs, and the voice of Peter Owen, who was the only child allowed to immigrate alone to Canada during the Holocaust. Peter was a JAHSENA board member, and his granddaughter, Tess Owen, wrote the teacher's guide for this learning tool. This exhibit was made possible through a grant to the Archives Society of Alberta from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

Necrology 2008-9

The following individuals were lost to us this year. We offer our condolences to their families and friends, and hope that their memories will be blessings to us all.

Miriam Aufman, z'l
 Fay Brown, z'l
 Rae Cowan, z'l
 Dr. Barney (Ben) Dlin z'l
 Manny Fefferman, z'l
 Faye Fialkow, z'l
 Efir Gershkovich, z'l
 Helen Goldberg z'l
 Dan Goody, z'l
 Anatoli Grager, z'l
 Dr. Frederick Greenberg, z'l
 Tammy Greenberg, z'l
 Anatoli Grager, z'l
 Brenda Grobman, z'l
 Terry Horwitz z'l
 Dr. Harold Jacobs, z'l
 Rae Kuban, z'l
 Michael Mann, z'l
 Elly Margolis, z'l
 Dr. Benjamin Margolus, z'l
 Morris Moses Miller, z'l
 David Panar, z'l
 Ignacio Ploit, z'l
 Rabbi Abraham Postone z'l
 Evelyn Raymond, z'l
 Kenneth Samuels z'l
 Max Satanove, z'l
 Leon W. Singer, z'l
 Reuven Stahl, z'l
 Adele Hody Stochinsky z'l
 Amelia Silverman, z'l
 Sophie Spevakow, z'l
 Ita Vrubel, z'l
 Leon Warhaft, z'l
 Samuel Warhaft, z'l
 Ann Woolfson, z'l
 Michael Zolf z'l

Family Writing Workshop

Writing Jewish Family Stories and Memoirs

Part II

Brought to you by JAHSENA

Sunday, November 1st, 2009, 1-4:30pm
Edmonton JCC

Registration Cost: \$10

Kosher Refreshments will be served.

Phone the office at (780) 489-2809 to register.

Workshop Description:

Stories passed from one generation to the next carry the values, culture and unique mythology of that family. Knowing our family's stories solidifies our sense of belonging. If you have been thinking of collecting family stories for your children and grandchildren, then this workshop is for you. Writer and editor, Lil Blume, will give you ideas for reviving memories and writing and organizing your family story project. Come prepared to do some writing and storytelling.

Presenter Lil Blume:

Lil has run family stories workshops for shuls in Hamilton, Victoria and Vancouver. She has presented this workshop at the Limmud Festival in Toronto. Her story about the game of chess over four generations of her family was published in *Parchment: The Journal of Contemporary Canadian Jewish Writing*. Lil's communication workshops have been held in industrial, healthcare and educational environments on both Canadian coasts and many places in between. In addition, she is currently an instructor in the Computer Science Department at the University of Toronto. For more information, see www.lilblume.ca. This will be her second visit to Edmonton, and a follow-up to her first workshop held last February.

Jake Superstein: A Man for All Faiths

BY DEBBY SHOCTOR

During one of the most tumultuous times in European history, Jake Superstein was born in Pinsk, Poland, into an Orthodox Jewish family in 1915. It was



Jake Superstein

during the Great War, just before the Russian Revolution, and a time of violence and prejudice for Poland's Jews. As a result, Jake's parents, Leyzer and Hannah, decided to seek a better life in the new world. Leyzer left first, as did many men of that era, arriving in Canada

in 1927 behind several of his brothers. Ten months later, he sent for Hannah and their six sons: Eddie, Max, Jake, Jack, Larry and Albert.

They settled on 95th street, in the heart of the immigrant neighborhood. Leyzer opened two stalls in the City Market, and later, he and his sons founded the Edmonton Produce Company in 1935, which grew into one of the largest wholesale poultry companies in Canada. During WWII, the company supplied powdered eggs to Canadian troops in Europe, and Jake Superstein was the Alberta representative of the Canadian Produce Council and an advisor to the federal government's Stabilization Board.

It became known that the boss of the poultry company was always willing to donate extra food to those in need, and in the 1950s, the Fathers from St. Mary's Silesian Boys' School approached Jake, ask-



Jake Superstein receiving the Order of Canada from Governor General Jean Sauve
JAHSENA Archives, donated by Don Superstein.

ing for help with a special Christmas meal.

"I went to the school to see for myself what was needed. When I looked at the boys, I didn't ask what race or colour or creed they were. When I see a need, or I'm called to help, I'm there."

This began a life-long relationship with the school, and he served on their board of directors for over 30 years, nine of them as chairman. Before joining the Board, he made sure the school was inter-denominational. It also began a Superstein tradition of giving away about 100 turkeys to various charities every Christmas, including the Boyle Street Co-op, the Marian Centre, Bissel Centre, Operation Friendship, Urban Manor, the Edmonton Food Bank and others, providing about 1200 Christmas dinners every year.

In the office beside his home, each year Superstein would count and crate the turkeys himself, then he and his driver would load the turkeys into the car and personally deliver them to the organizations. "My wife, Ruth, writes a card to go with each turkey. I like to send greetings from my family," said Jake. "Sure, I'm Jewish. But I'm also a citizen," explained Superstein. "It's part of my faith to give. And it's also unethical for a

society not to help their hungry people."

In the mid-1980s, inspired by the work of Edmonton's fledgling Food Bank, Jake helped to found the Joy of Sharing Society, along with 10 city congregations. This Society grew out of a meeting that he and then Rabbi Haim Kemelman of the Beth Shalom Congregation, had with the neighboring parish of St. Joseph's Cathedral. The Society was formed to put together a concert to raise funds for the Food Bank at the Jubilee Auditorium, featuring the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Israeli conductor Uri Mayer, amongst others. The sold-out concert raised about \$50,000 for the food bank, and brought together many of the city's congregations, including: Beth Shalom, St. Joseph's, the Ahmadyya Muslim Association and Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Anglican and United Church congregations.

According to Jake, one of the projects he was most proud of was spearheading a fund-raising drive that, with a matching provincial grant, raised more than \$300,000 for the Friends of the Catholic University in Lublin, Poland.

In 1985, Jake Superstein, an Orthodox Jew, was awarded a Medal of Merit from the Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. "It may seem unusual that someone of the Hebrew Faith was presented with the award, said Christian Graefe, Prior of the Order, "But it seems that wherever we turned, whether it was for a project to re-equip a children's hospital or something else, the name of Superstein popped up." In 1986, Superstein was awarded the City of Edmonton's Silver Ribbon Award for improving Edmonton's quality of life. A year later, he was awarded the Order of Canada, and in November, 1995, the University of Alberta awarded him an Honourary Doctorate of Laws. He also served on the boards of the Edmonton General Hospital, the University of Alberta, the Boyle Street Co-op, the Marian Centre and the Salvation Army.

When asked in 1995 why he helped people of other faiths, Superstein said, "The Bible tells us that when God created the

world, He created one man whose name was Adam. He was the first man – not the first Jew, Catholic or Protestant, not the first white, black or yellow man. In the words of Scripture, he was the first Universal Man, the father of all God's children." He added, "I cherish the ground I walk on in Alberta with my family. I love the freedoms we have from the freedom of worship to the freedom of being able to debate and agree to disagree."

Jake passed away in 2005 at the age of 90, leaving behind his wife Ruth, son Don, and daughters Shelley and Marlene. At his funeral, a booklet of his quotations was passed around, which included the following:

Speaking about Canada, he said, "There are few lands in the world blessed by God and men of good will where people of all faiths, cultures and all races can get together in the spirit of true and sincere brotherhood. I, as a loyal and proud Jew, am happy to take part in these festivities among friends of other faiths. This is indeed a shining example in a world torn by prejudice and racial hate."

NEW MEMBERS:

JAHSENA would like to welcome the following new members:

Risa Margolus, Edmonton, AB
 Lewis & Irene Klar, Edmonton, AB
 Odette Masliyah, Edmonton, AB
 Dr. Eliot Phillipson, Toronto, ON
 The Evangelical Sisters of Mary, Millet, AB
 Justice Eric & Sharon Macklin, Edmonton, AB
 Tobey Switzer, Edmonton, AB

Membership donations are used for the operating costs of the Society, which is a self-sustaining organization. Membership fees include spouses except for individual membership. Members are eligible to vote at the annual general meetings of the society. Membership includes a subscription to our publication, Heritaga/Yerusha. Fees cover uniform membership year from September 1st to August 31st. Donations are tax deductible. We thank the above listed people for their support in the past year.

JAHSENA Membership 2008-2009

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 Robert Spevakow
 Caroline Ullman
 Gary Woodrow

JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

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

Catalogue of books, pamphlets and printed material: Jewish Canadiana. ISBN 978-0-9811643-0-4 By Gerald Stone. Self-published.

Six photographs of the Edmonton Jewish community, circa 1930s and 1940s, donated by Dr. Marvin and Donna Weisler.

Photos of the JAHSENA trip to see the Montefiore Institute in Calgary's Heritage Park,

donated by Allan Devins, Jini Vogel, George Goldsand, Jack Switzer and Debby Shoctor.

Shirt commemorating Edmonton Hadassah-WIZO group Bat Mitzvah in Israel, 1992, donated by Norma Nozick.

Miscellaneous clippings mentioning members of the Edmonton Jewish Community, donated by Sharon Abbott.

239 photos of Yom Hatzmaut 2008, donated by Frida Pesin of the Jewish Federation.

Seven photos of Marcus Furs donated by David Marcus.

Eulogies of David Pollack, Dan Goody and Terry Horwitz.

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.

"FROM PEDLARS TO PATRIARCHS: A LEGACY REMEMBERED" and "BITTERSWEET MEMORIES: THE WAR YEARS"

The Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta is taking orders for copies of "From Pedlars to Patriarchs: A Legacy Remembered," and its sequel: "Bittersweet Memories: The War Years" its documentary films about the history of the Edmonton Jewish Community. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of these films, they are available on DVD for \$18. Please contact the Archives office at 489-2809.



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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 times a year.

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

- Patron \$100
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