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# HERITAGE

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



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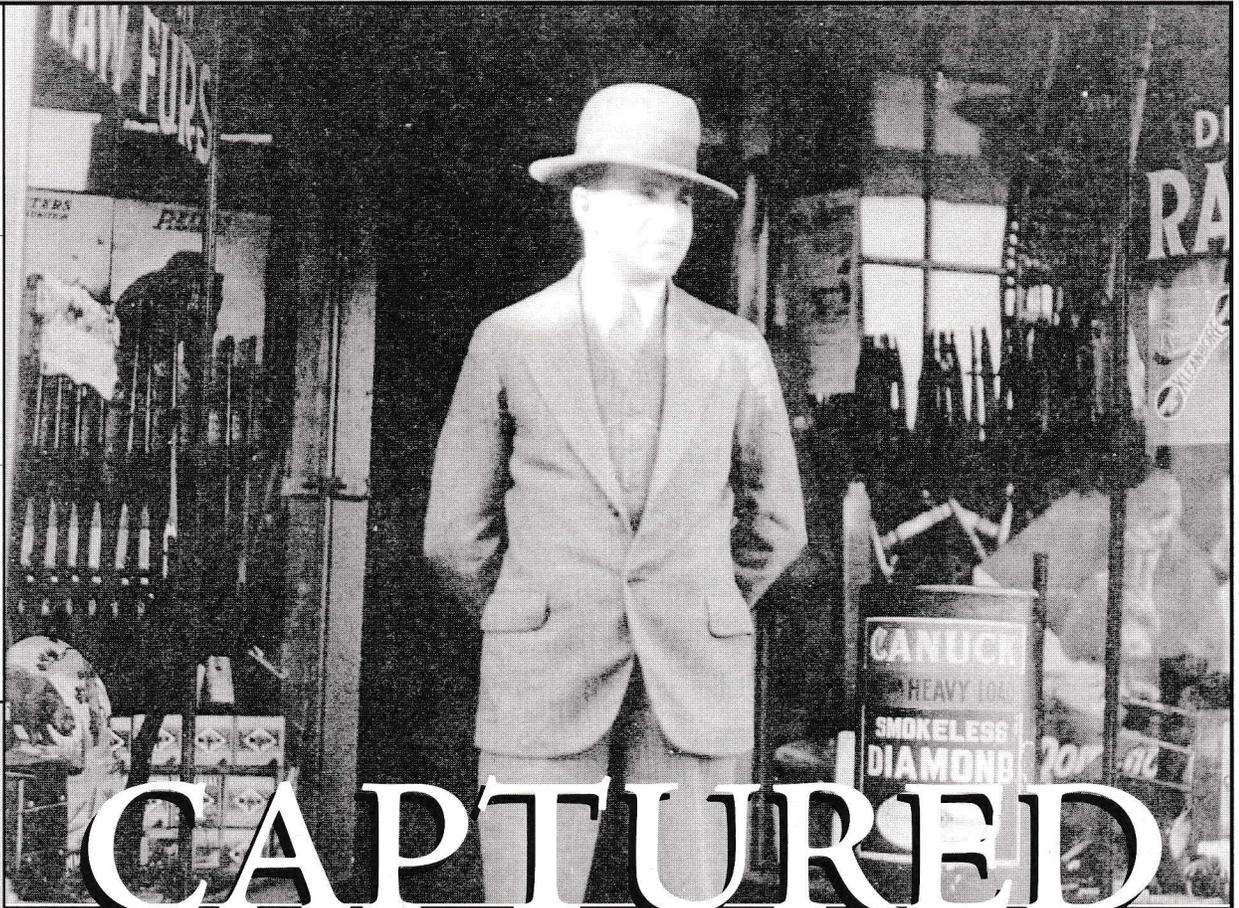
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Famous for Sam  
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Edmonton

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## NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Thanks to a grant from the Archives Society of Alberta, we now have cable internet. This will enable us to upload digital files and photographs to the Web much faster.

As a result, our email address has changed. It is now [jahsena@shaw.ca](mailto:jahsena@shaw.ca).



# CAPTURED

IN DOCUMENTARY BEING PRODUCED BY JAHSENA

Max Weinlos in front of his sporting goods and men's clothing store, 101st Street, circa 1929.

There were close to 100 Jewish businesses on or near 101st Street in the early part of the 1900s. Many of these businesses are captured in the documentary being produced by JAHSENA reflecting the vision and the struggles of our early pioneers to make a home for their families. The documentary, being produced by Dan Kauffman with researcher Dr. Reevan Dolgoy, is expected to be finished this fall.

**Only 50 Copies of our  
history book are left!**

**YES!** Only 50 copies of "The First Century of Jewish Life in Edmonton and Northern Alberta", by Uri Rosenzweig are left. At \$50 a piece, they are going fast, so get them before they are gone. When they're gone, they're gone!



## From the Archivist's Desk...

by DEBBY SHOCTOR

I am happy to report that our collection is now searchable. As of the end of March, we have 110 fonds-level descriptions uploaded onto the Archives Network of Alberta (ANA) database, a searchable database which can be found on line at [www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org). Thanks to our institutional membership in the Archives Society of Alberta (ASA), we were able to obtain a grant for cable high-speed internet, in order to upload our records. We were also able to obtain the services of the ASA Archivist-at-large Scott Goodine, who was with us for the month of February. Together, Scott and I were able to catalogue roughly half of our collection of 280 fonds at the first level, and upload these RAD-compliant (internationally standardized) descriptions onto the ANA database.

This database will eventually contain all of the fonds-level descriptions of all of the collections of all of the member archives in Alberta. This includes the collections not only of JAHSENA, but of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the Edmonton City Archives, Calgary's Glenbow as well as

the many smaller archives across the province, similar in nature to JAHSENA. After the initial stage of this project is complete, the entire database will be merged with CAIN (The Canadian Archives Information Network), its national counterpart. Once this

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is complete, all the archives in Canada will be able to be searched at the fonds level.

As you can well imagine, this will be a major step forward for researchers of our collection. Even at this early stage, you can go to ANA, plug in a key word, and find records on line for our community. This puts us on par with the

Canadian Jewish Congress Archives in Montreal, the Ontario Jewish Archives and the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada.

After we complete the description of our entire collection at the fonds or collections level, we will then proceed to the series and file levels. Hardly any Archives catalogue right down to the item level, it is just too time-consuming.

Our next project will be to scan part of our large photo collection, and upload the images onto the Alberta Images Database, on the ASA website. You will then be able to search for photos of our community by keyword, for viewing on the web. These photos will be print-protected for copyright purposes, but will be in TIF format, or ultra-high resolution, so that the viewer will be able to zoom in and out to see minute details. Try looking at some of the Glenbow photos already up there to get the idea. We hope eventually to scan our newspapers and other important collections so that they can also be digitally viewed on the web. Remember:  
[www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org).

ירשה

## HERITAGE

PUBLISHED BY  
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 of Edmonton & Northern Alberta

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## INTERESTED IN OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY'S HISTORY?

JAHSENA needs a volunteer historian who would like to write articles on the history of families, individuals, organizations and businesses of our community in Edmonton and northern Alberta for our newsletters.

If you have an interest in history, please let us know in the office.

## VISITING ARCHIVIST



Visiting archivist Scott Goodine was with us for the month of February, to help us complete a large number of RAD-compliant descriptions, and upload them to the ANA database on the world wide web.

Thanks to Scott, almost half of our 280 fonds, or collections are now described and searchable on the [www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org) database.

# The HOTEL

## ABRAHAM CRISTALL BUILT

by LAWRENCE HERZOG

*The following article appeared in Edmonton Real Estate Weekly and is reprinted here in part with permission of the author, Lawrence Herzog.*

It stood for more than 60 years near one of Edmonton's busiest intersections and became one of the city's preferred gathering places. When it fell to the wrecker's ball in late 1972, a lot of local history went with the Royal George Hotel.

The hotel began operations in 1910 in the Cristall Block, a new building erected at the corner of what was then First Street and Bellamy Street. Today it is 101<sup>st</sup> Street and 102<sup>nd</sup> Ave and the site of the Northwest corner of Edmonton Centre.

The block was built by Abraham Cristall who, along with his wife Rebecca, became Edmonton's first Jewish settlers in the autumn of 1893. They moved into a house on the eastern side of the Hudson's Bay Reserve, near 95<sup>th</sup> Street. As other Jewish newcomers arrived, they settled near the Cristalls. Abraham Cristall was the first president of the Edmonton Hebrew Association, formed at a meeting of 10 committed Jews at the Boyaner home on August 12, 1906. He quickly made his mark in local business and when construction commenced in the spring of 1910, Cristall promised the biggest and finest hotel in the city.

"The plans have recently been changed to make it a monster hotel worthy of Edmonton," reported the June 20, 1910 edition of the Edmonton Bulletin. Those

described Hopkins and considering his lineage and record of achievement, the paper wasn't far wrong. In a 1913 profile, the writer called Hopkins



Royal George Hotel, circa 1930

plans called for 117 rooms over five floors with four stores on the main floor and an electric elevator — a big deal for its day.

The building was designed by Edmonton architects Hopkins and Wright and constructed by another local firm, Edinger and Nesbitt, who had just finished work on McDougall Methodist Church. Not much is known of Mr. Wright but Edward Collis Hopkins was a renowned designer.

"A Natural Born Builder" was how the Edmonton Journal

"Edmonton's leading architect, and the designer of some of the finest buildings in the Dominion of Canada."

He designed Regina City Hall, the Vancouver Opera House and Calgary Normal School. He was Alberta's first Provincial Architect, appointed in 1905, and was later involved in the design of some of our city's most prominent landmarks, including the Prince of Wales Armoury (1915; now home to the City of Edmonton Archives) Great West Saddlery Company Building (1911) and the Pantages Theatre (1913).

For his design of the Cristall block, he chose a traditional commercial style, with a main floor faced in stone over brick and brick cladding above. The Bulletin reported the building's frontage as 80 feet and a depth of 100 feet. "It is being modernly (sic) constructed with steel frame work on a substantial concrete foundation. The walls will be of solid red brick."

Inside, the rotunda was proclaimed as "one of the finest in the West," with

and Ryley, Alberta.

The proprietor threw a gala dinner at Christmas to mark the opening of his new Royal George, named to mark the 1910 ascension to the throne of King George V. The menu for that evening included: baked wild duck, filet of salmon, roast green goose, boiled leg of Southdown Mutton and caribou in a sherry sauce. Canadian Club rye was 15 cents a shot and a bottle of Pommard as \$1.00.

The Royal George quickly garnered a reputation as one of the values in town and became popular with northern travellers, trappers and traders. Its proximity to the station for the two main railways, the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian National Railways, also worked in the hotel's favour.

Abraham operated the hotel until his death in 1944 and then the business passed on to his children George, Max, Ted, Rose and Jessie. It remained in the family until 1965 until it was sold.

When the building went down in the autumn of 1972, countless old timers were moved to remember, with tears and fondness, their memories of the Royal George. From beer in the tavern to roaring debates in the lobby, the old hotel had a character and comfortable, easy familiarity that couldn't be replaced. But it, along with the old courthouse and Woodwards store, were all demolished in 1972, making way for the sprawling new Edmonton Centre complex.

Photo courtesy of the City of Edmonton Archives, EA-50-17

# HELP US PRESERVE OUR

"OF ALL NATIONAL ASSETS, ARCHIVES ARE THE MOST PRECIOUS; THEY ARE THE MOST VALUABLE AND THE EXTENT OF OUR CARE OF THEM MARKS THE EXTENT OF OUR CIVILIZATION."

## Your membership helps to support the following:

### • JAHSENA Archives

Our Acquisitions committee continues to collect a variety of material, both personal and organizational, produced by the Jewish communities of Edmonton and Northern Alberta. This includes the following: newspapers, minutes of meetings, flyers and newsletters, invitations to events, photographs, audio and video tapes. This material is appropriately stored and preserved in the archives.

### • Publications

JAHSENA publishes our newsletter, **Heritage/Yerusha**, four times annually; and distributes to our membership. Our founding publication, "**The First Century of Jewish Life in Edmonton and Northern Alberta, 1893-1993**", by Uri Rosenzweig, was published in 2000 with a print run of 750 copies. There are just over 50 copies remaining. A new documentary film on the history of the early Edmonton Jewish business community is in production and scheduled for release in the Fall of 2003.

### • Affiliations

JAHSENA is an institutional member of the Archives Society of Alberta (ASA). This

association has provided educational opportunities for our Archivist; grants for preservation assessment of our archives, and for hardware and a high-speed internet connection; as well as assistance with cataloguing our collection. Our complete fonds-level descriptions have begun to be uploaded to the Archives Network of Alberta database on the ASA web site, [www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org), and we will shortly begin the uploading of our vast photo collection to the Alberta Images database, also available on the ASA web site at [www.archivesalberta.org](http://www.archivesalberta.org). Our own web site is available at [www.jahsena.org](http://www.jahsena.org).

### • The JAHSENA and JCC libraries

The archives contains its own small research library of volumes on local, regional and national Jewish history of about 100 volumes. In addition, we are situated right next door to the Jewish Community Centre Library, of which we have custodianship, which contains over 2000 volumes on all subjects relating to Jewish life in Canada and around the world.

### • Oral History Collection

Our oral history committee is very proud of our collection of over 180 oral history tapes. In addition, there are many more

know. We also need volunteers to do transcriptions and summaries of the interviews.



Can you identify this photo? What is the setting, the year, and the event? Who are the people in it? If you would like to try your luck, there are many more like this one in the office waiting for you to identify! Please call 489-2809.

names on our "to do" list. If you are interested in being interviewed, or in doing the interviewing, please let us

### • Photo Collection

Our Archives contains a large collection of black and white and colour photos, slides and

negatives, which still need to be identified, and we need friends who would be pleasant about while helping with this important task. Please contact

### • Rotating

Our display of rotating Community Collections of archival, audio and video collections on display is "Tiger" Goldberg's collection of Eskimos for Lieberman. Edmonton newspaper participate on the ASA "Feast: a History of Archives." explored a

### • News

Our Archives is the largest and most comprehensive collection of newspaper collection in Western Canada. Our/Your Collection The Albert

# OUR PAST

THE GIFT OF ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER,  
"PRESERVATION." — SIR A. DOUGHTY, DOMINION ARCHIVIST, 1904-1935

## g activities of JAHSENA:

There are many  
need to be  
If you and your  
ould like to spend a  
fternoon reminiscing  
ing us catalogue  
ant collection.  
tact the office.

### g Exhibits

case in the Jewish  
y Centre is the site  
exhibits from our  
tifact and photo  
Currently on  
he collection of  
sports legend Cecil  
dstick. Previous  
ve included the  
of Edmonton  
under Moses  
and a display of  
s Jewish  
s. We have also  
d in a virtual exhibit  
web site entitled  
istory of food in  
his exhibit can be  
vesalberta.org.

### per Collection

es contains the  
most extensive  
of Edmonton Jewish  
s in existence. The  
cludes The  
wish News,  
community News,  
a Jewish Chronicle,

The Edmonton Jewish Star, The  
Edmonton Jewish Times &  
Record, The Edmonton Jewish  
News and Edmonton Jewish Life.

### • Jewish Cemetery Listings/Genealogy

Board Member Cory Felber has  
recently completed  
compilation of a photographic

catalog of all the stones in the  
Jewish Cemetery, as well as a  
complete listing of all the  
names and dates of the  
graves. In addition, we collect  
obituaries and eulogies on an  
ongoing basis. Sometime next  
year, we hope to form a  
genealogy subcommittee of  
JAHSENA.

## JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

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

### Beth Shalom Synagogue

**Bulletins, 1990 - present**  
(incomplete), donated by Neil  
Loomer, Executive Director, Beth  
Shalom Synagogue. *(If anyone has  
older Beth Shalom Bulletins, or  
those from other synagogues or  
organizations, we would love to  
have them!)*

**"More than Gold: Outposts of  
Civilization to Cornerstones of  
Community"**, a documentary  
produced by the Jewish Historical  
Society of British Columbia, about the  
Jewish Community in that Province.

**Personal Collection of Mickey  
Dlin**, donated by Cory Felber.

**"Morris Two-Gun Cohen" by  
David Levy**, a biography of the  
famous Jewish bodyguard of Sun  
Yat Sen.

**Personal Collection of Ansel Mark**  
- photographs and history relating  
to the Mark, Hiller and Garfin  
families of Edmonton.

**"Records of the Fifth  
Edmonton Pioneer Hebrew  
Troop"** (The Jewish Boy  
Scouts), 1931-1934, donated by  
Dr. Ted Aaron.

**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.**

WE NEED  
YOU  
AS A



MEMBER OF  
JAHSENA!

PLEASE HELP US  
PRESERVE OUR HISTORY  
FOR THE FUTURE!

Membership in JAHSENA

costs as little as \$12 a year for  
an individual, and includes a  
subscription to this newsletter.

Please note that

Heritage/Yerusha is only

distributed free to the

community at large once a

year, and is otherwise only

available with membership in

the Society.

Call 489-2809 today for details.

# THE JEWS OF Fort McMurray

by IRWIN HUBERMAN

In 2002, Irwin Huberman released a book: *The Place We Call Home, A History of Fort McMurray as its People Remember*. The following are some Jewish highlights from the book, mixed with Irwin's more recent recollections. Fort McMurray has a current population of about 45,000 and is located about 435 kilometers northeast of Edmonton.

## KUSHNER THE FURRIER

In 1913, a heavy set man with bushy eyebrows and a Lithuanian accent arrived in Fort McMurray, becoming the first fulltime Jewish resident of the infant northern community.

Sam Kushner came to Canada in the early 1900s, made his way across the country and eventually settled in Edmonton. During the early 1910s, he became intrigued by some of the optimistic news trickling south from Fort McMurray, and decided to venture north.

In the old country, Kushner's surname meant "furrier" and although his immediate descendants were not involved in the trade, Sam quickly immersed himself in his namesake profession.

Kushner's easy going style and respect for native people quickly won him friends. In 1914, the Jewish population of Fort McMurray doubled with the arrival of his brother-in-law Ephraim Allman.

From his freestanding store on Franklin Avenue, Fort McMurray's dusty main street, Kushner bought and sold fur and provided a variety of services including axe sharpening. Every type of clothing, tool or foodstuff was either stacked on his shelf or hung from his store rafters.

Kushner was one of the founders of the original 1914 Fort McMurray Board of Trade. His sons Laz and David were raised in Fort McMurray and were both fixtures at the Kushner store and within the community.

One of Sam's local claims to fame was his big black car which was brought up the rails from Edmonton around 1921. Oldtimers recall that whenever there was a crisis or a cause, Sam Kushner could be counted on for a donation of money or materials.

Kushner remained in Fort McMurray until the

mid-1940s and died in Edmonton in 1947.

"He was easy to get along with and always spoke of his love for the Indians," recalled daughter-in-law Martha Kushner.

## HANSON THE "SHMATAH MAN"

In 1922, a Jewish/Russian immigrant, Edward Hanson moved to Fort McMurray to launch a second hand store. The new business, "Uncle Sam's" was located on Franklin Avenue and served as a meeting place for both new and departing residents looking to buy or sell furniture, tools, firearms or work clothing.

Soon after his arrival, Hanson immersed himself in northern culture. His daughter Ann-Zoe recalled Edward learned to speak six languages including Cree and Chipewyan. His store was a hotbed of activity as trappers and local residents gathered around the store's wood stove to trade stories.

The Hanson family remained active in the community until 1960 when they sold their store to Alec and Alice Haxton.

The comfort and trust native people placed in Hanson earned him the endearing Chipewyan nickname "Uchulah," meaning "Rags."

## NORM SIMONS AND ELVIS

Throughout the 1970s, new apartments began to spring up in Fort McMurray and a Jewish developer, Norman Simons, led the charge.

Simons, an Edmonton based lawyer built a number of apartments behind the Peter Pond Shopping Centre and also purchased a series of lots for \$150 each and developed light industrial and office space.

"We bought land from people who were growing potatoes there," Simons recalled. "That's what gave us our start."

During the 1970s, Simons became one of most influential members of Fort McMurray's business community. Simon's flair for lobbying Fort McMurray town council members to rezone land in his favour struck fear in the hearts of many local politicians.

A retired alderman recalled how Simons would occasionally refer to the longstanding suffering of "his people" to stress how unfairly

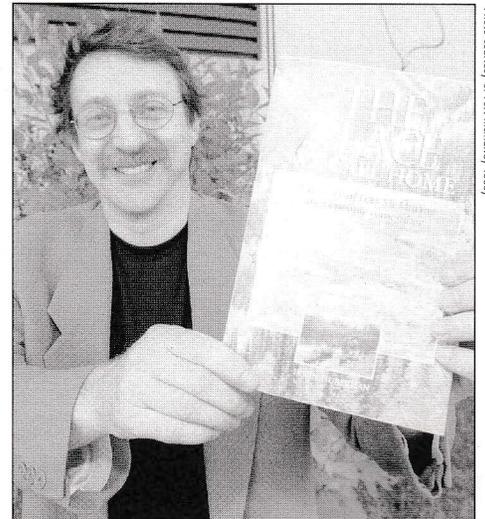


Photo courtesy of Fort McMurray Today

Irwin Huberman with his book, "The Place We Call Home, A History of Fort McMurray as its People-Remember."

he sometimes felt he was being treated by the town's zoning department.

One of Simons' other claims to fame was the hotel and tourist attraction he developed during the mid-1970s.

Faced with a shortage of accommodation for workers building the Syncrude site, Simons purchased a multi-roomed one-story building and placed it in the Little Prairie area of the town. Simons named the accommodation "The Heartbreak Hotel," promoting it with a logo featuring a large heart with an arrow piercing through it.

"It was the Presley era and everyone knew where it was," Simons recalled.

The Heartbreak Hotel also served as student housing and later an art gallery before its demise in the late 1980s.

## FORT McMURRAY'S FIRST MINYAN: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

A good deed initiated by the late Jack Rosen in Edmonton during the mid-1980s led to a phenomenal event two weeks later in Fort McMurray.

I believe it was 1985 when I traveled to Edmonton from Fort McMurray to attend Yom Kippur services at Congregation Beth Shalom. I was provided with a single seat in the shul's "blue section" and not knowing anyone at the shul at the time, quietly went about my davening.

Congregant Jack Rosen saw me sitting alone and towards the end of "Neilah" service prompted his son, Robert to approach me to break the fast with his family.

That night, as we filled our empty stomachs at the Rosen table, I was introduced to another Fort McMurray resident, a Romanian immigrant who

*continued on page 7*

# CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS PHOTO?

What is the setting, the year, and the event? Who are the people in it? If you would like to try your luck, there are many more like this one in the office waiting for you to identify! PLEASE CALL 489-2809.



Peretz Shul Board 1922 - Donated by Helen Paull

## The Jews of Fort McMurray *Continued from page 6*

I remember as Mr. Schaffer. Mr. Schaffer happened to be living temporarily in Fort McMurray working as a tradesman at Syncrude site.

Two weeks later, as publisher of the Fort McMurray Express newspaper, I was called to one of the local hotels to interview two brothers from Winnipeg, named Aronovitch who were in Fort McMurray that day signing a deal with Syncrude Canada Ltd. to manage their rental properties. We

quickly established a Jewish bond.

The brothers were distraught. It was Shmeini Atzeret, the "yorzeit" of their mother, and there was no way that they would be able to muster an Orthodox minyan to say Kaddish in such an isolated place as Fort McMurray.

My mind went to work. I already knew of five other Jewish men in Fort McMurray. But where would we find the other two?

Then I remembered Mr. Schaffer. I called the Nomad Inn and eventually tracked down Mr. Schaffer. Mr. Schaffer was bubbling with good news. That

day, he had met another Jew, an Iraqi, who was also working at the Syncrude site.

"Bring him along," I said. "Tonight we're going to daven."

We mustered 10 kippot and huddled in groups of three or four around the three siddurim we had. And on that night, Shemini Azereret, 10 men davened in Fort McMurray and the Kaddish was recited.

The Minyan served as a starting point a year later for the Fort McMurray Jewish Cultural Society which eventually grew to about 20 Jewish members. At the

home of Jerry and Brenda Lobb, rabbis would come and teach. A bar mitzvah and a wedding were eventually held at the Sawridge Hotel whose catering manager had worked in the kosher kitchen at Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel.

Each time I hear the Rosen name at Beth Shalom, I am reminded of how a simple mitzvah completed with such piety can continue to grow and grow.

That evening in Fort McMurray, Alberta, a mother was remembered, God's name was "exalted" and history was made.

FROM THE ARCHIVES...

The following radio vignette was written by historian Tony Cashman, based on an interview with Mr. Sam Cohen, and broadcast July 12, 1954. It has been reprinted with permission of the author

# THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

by TONY CASHMAN

*This article is based on an interview with Mr. Sam Cohen of Edmonton. It was originally a radio vignette narrated by Jack Wilson as part of a series of portraits of famous people in Edmonton.*

The Old Curiosity Shop is not the London Curiosity Shop of the famous Charles Dickens, but the Old Curiosity Shop famous for Sam Cohen of Edmonton. The shop is itself a curiosity. It is basically a second-hand store, but a second-hand store with a difference. The sign says, "We buy, sell and exchange anything of value!" That's what they all say! But the things which Sam Cohen buys, sells and exchanges are several cuts above the average. They are mostly antiques or nearly antiques, stacked around with the dust still on them, waiting to be rediscovered, taken home, and polished up into conversation pieces.

The Old Curiosity Shop is a second-hand store with an Oxford accent. Over many years, Mr. Cohen and his shop have continued to make Edmonton a more interesting place to live. To pinpoint specific years, Mr. Cohen and the shop have been at the present location, just across Jasper from the MacDonald Hotel, since 1939. From 1912 to 1937, they were at the corner of Jasper and 97 Street, the northwest corner, in the old blacksmith shop.

In 1910, Mr. Cohen came to Edmonton. Those were the highlight years, but the years and memories of Sam Cohen go back much further than that. They go back to Mogolev in the Ukraine, in the days when Czar Nicholas the Second still sat secure in the throne of Imperial Russia. The area was Orchard Country - the Cohen family had orchards. In the summer and fall, there were frequent river cruises to their market town of Katrinaslav near Kiev. The fruit was loaded on to flatboats - covered flatboats about the size of the Old Curiosity Shop, and the Cohens drifted down to market. There was beauty in the countryside for the young man who would see it or could see it, but Sam Cohen, always very near-sighted, could see very little of the beauty in nature. He had to see it up close in things like china, cut glass, and fabrics. Even as a schoolboy, he was acquiring the knack of antiques, which made possible the Old Curiosity Shop.

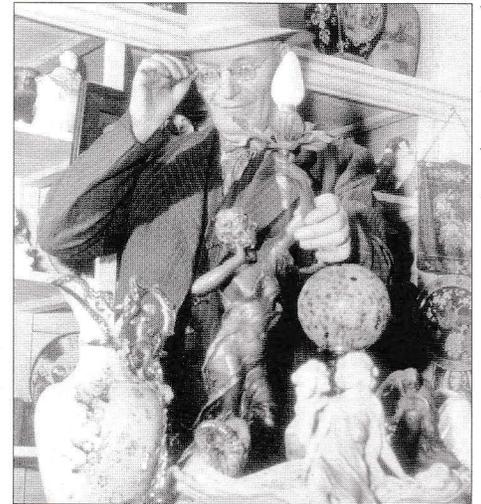
The first of the Cohens to leave the Ukraine for Canada was Sam's oldest brother Solomon. Solomon Cohen arrived in 1905 and set up a homestead near North Battleford. His letters back

home were so enthusiastic about the opportunities available, that the rest of the family decided to come too. Sam Cohen landed in Winnipeg in May, 1910 and he went to work for the CNR for 17 cents and hour. For a young bachelor, 17 cents an hour seemed like inflation wages. Young Sam wondered how this economic paradise had escaped his notice for so long. But after three months he was on his way to Edmonton, and even better things.

His brother Solomon had got bored with farming near North Battleford. Solomon began to long for the more active life in bargain and sales. He had come to Edmonton and opened up a second-hand store. Sam came on to Edmonton too, and quickly found a niche for himself. He devised an unusual sort of wholesale business. He went from door to door buying old suits and selling them to second-hand dealers. By 1912, Sam had done well enough to open his own second-hand store, which he did at 97th and Jasper. Brother Solomon had his store diagonally across Jasper where Moler Barber College later stood. And so the Cohen brothers had East Jasper Avenue pretty well covered.

Right from the start, though, Sam's shop was different. In among the usual things which turn up in second-hand stores were a few of the finer things which Sam knows and loves. As the years went on, he was able to expand his business in the finer things, but has never been able to get rid of the junk. Part of the trouble is that to acquire five things he likes and knows to be good, he'll have to buy 20 things which he doesn't much care for or that have little market value.

Another source of supply for the Old Curiosity Shop are Sam Cohen's friends and customers when they go on trips to Europe. He has them pick up a few things. Still another source of unusual items are the antique auction sales of J.H. Reed. Mr. Cohen never misses one of Mr. Reed's sales. If Joe Reed can't get the Auction Sale crowd to bid \$50 for a Dresden china clock, which both know to be worth \$50, Sam will buy it for \$25. Sam's in business every day and can wait until the day when someone will come along



Sam Cohen, Antique dealer, in his store, "The Old Curiosity Shop", circa 1954

to pay \$50. The only difficulty is that most of Sam's customers are Joe Reed's customers too, so Mr. Cohen has to bid as surreptitiously as possible. If the crowd knows Sam Cohen is bidding for the Dresden China Clock, the bidding will go up and up until Joe Reed gets the \$50.

Sometimes, people will point out to Sam that an item has been in his window for many years and will bargain with him to reduce the price. But, he explains cheerfully that his is an antique shop and the longer it stays there the more valuable it gets. Sam had discovered a curious thing about human nature. In his Curiosity Shop he finds that he can put something quite nice in the window, and it will stay there for five years with never a nibble from a customer. But if he moves the item to the other side of the window only a couple of feet, it will sell within a week. He has tried it many times, and it always works.

As we said, Sam Cohen moved into his present location in 1939. The location has been at various times, the Blue Department Store, a Real Estate office, and a grocery store. You can still identify the old fixtures of this store with Sam's stock piled on top of them. It was in 1939 that Sam decided to call his place the Old Curiosity Shop. That's what people came in looking for he explains - curiosities. In recent years the Old Curiosity Shop has not been a money-maker. At times, Mr. Cohen has been subsidizing it from his other enterprises - enterprises like hotels and apartment blocks. But he keeps it going because it's his hobby and favoured pastime. On top of that, Sam likes the customers. He's had some pretty prominent customers: Princess Alice, wife of the Governor General went through the shop during the war and emerged with a statue of her uncle, George VI. But Sam says, "Most of my customers are as nice as any princess." So the Old Curiosity Shop stays on and as the say in Alice in Wonderland, "It gets curiouser and curiouser."