

ירשה

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HERITAGE

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



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Diamond
Edmonton
Clothier and
Founding Father

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Snell z'l
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Jewish Boxers
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JAHSENA DOCUMENTARY

We are expecting our film documentary on the early history of the Edmonton Jewish business community to be finished by the end of June. Reevan Dolgoy, the film's researcher, has recently returned from Samoa and has been working along with our President, Dan Kauffman, to complete this film. We hope to premiere it on August 29th 2004 at the Provincial Museum. Watch for your invitation this summer!

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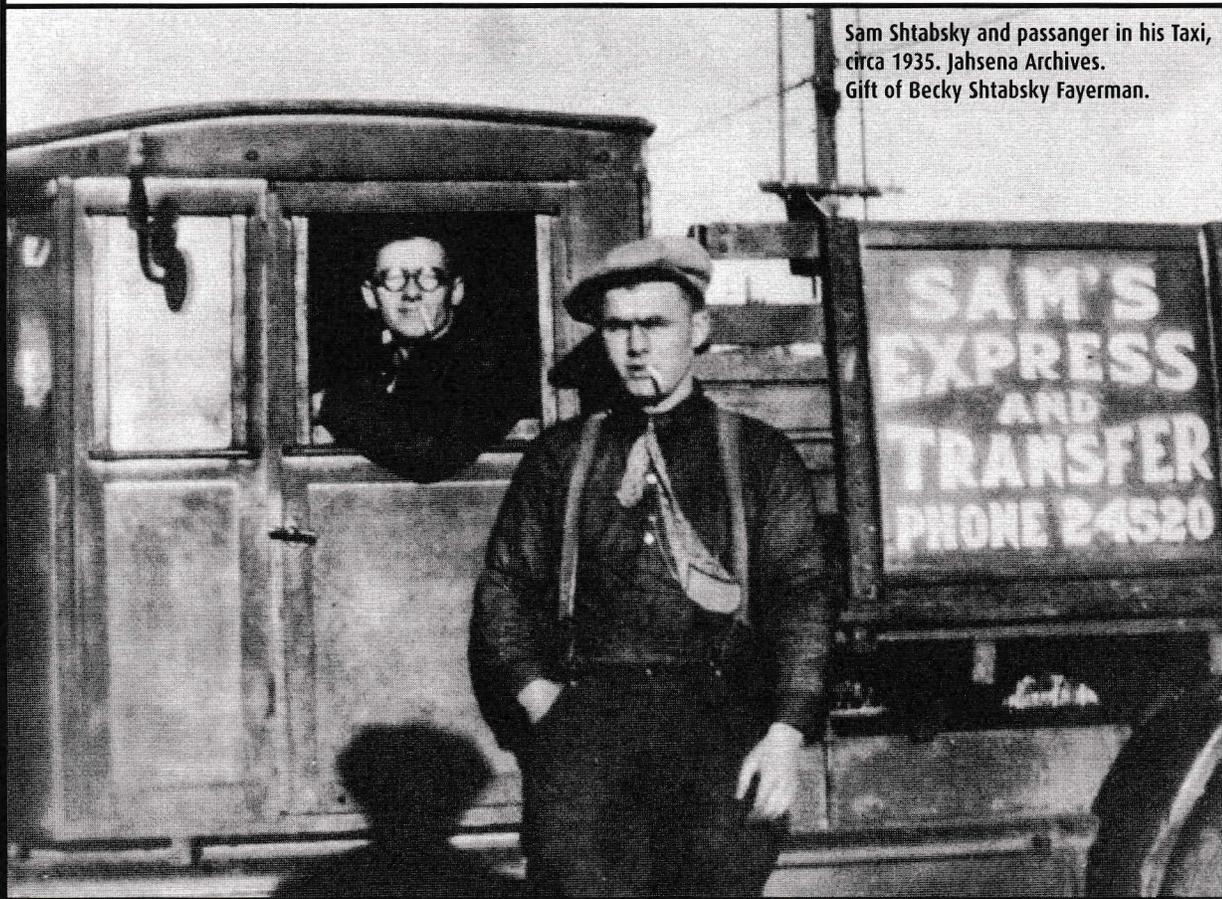
Sam Shtabsky came to Canada with his brother Joe from Russia in 1924. He married Sonia Kazakwich of Calgary in 1933. Sam operated a Taxi service in Edmonton for many years until his untimely

death in 1952. Generations of Edmonton children remember being ferried to and from Talmud Torah in his Taxi.

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 Summer.



Sam Shtabsky and passanger in his Taxi, circa 1935. Jahsena Archives. Gift of Becky Shtabsky Fayerman.



From the Archivist's Desk...

by DEBBY SHOCTOR

It has been a very busy few months since the last newsletter. The following are just some of the things I have been working on:

Archives in the Classroom

– I have been working with Barb Bushewsky Rosof, who was hired by the ASA to help complete this project. The project will scan small amounts of holdings in member Archives having to do with immigration for use by Alberta secondary students in research projects. The program saw a government grant go to the ASA for this purpose. Barbara and I have just completed the scanning and uploading of almost 800 documents, both photographs and text, to the ASA website databases Alberta In Sight and Alberta In Word. I plan to continue this project over time, starting with all the photographs we used in "The First Century of Jewish Life". If you want to view these items, please go to www.archivesalberta.org and look at the Alberta In Sight and Alberta In Word databases.

Exhibit at Menorah Curl-a-thon – Bernie Estrin approached JAHSENA about borrowing our Menorah Curling Club Exhibit for display at the recent Rexall-Menorah Curl-a-Thon. The trophies and other artifacts were most appreciated by the participants, and the items were returned in good condition.

Drop-in Centre Lunch – I was asked by the Jewish Drop-in Centre to give a talk and tour of the archives at the JCC when

the seniors came for lunch at Gary's on February 18th. The seniors really seemed to enjoy the program, and several filled out family trees and Oral History forms, which will be added to our collection. I have passed on the names of the potential interviewees to Peter Owen, now that he is back.

ACJS Conference – I have been asked to be a panelist at a session of the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies Conference taking place in Winnipeg May 30th-June 2. This will be an opportunity for me to liaise with other Jewish Archivists in Canada, particularly Janice Rosen of CJC, Irma Penn of JHSWC and Lisa Singer of the Ontario Jewish Archives.

Expansion – The office is rapidly running out of storage space, and I have made an agreement with Gayle to second the room by the pool where the Federation, JCC and UJA records are kept, as those have already been given to JAHSENA, but have not been gone through thoroughly.

Donations – We have received numerous donations this year, as you can see from the list later in the newsletter, including a very large one from the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, and from Maccabiah Canada Edmonton Section. Thank you to all our donors, and especially those who came out to our first open house this March, or dropped in later in the week. We plan to have more of these, so look for the next

one, and be prepared to dig through your basements and attics and bring your things in to us.

Old Beth Israel Synagogue

– On this front there is both good news and bad news: Our grant application from Alberta Heritage was denied due to lack of funds on their part. This year they decided only to grant funds to those projects which were already designated as Historical Sites by the Province.

Unfortunately, we are not at that stage yet, but we are actively pursuing alternative sources of funds. In the meantime, we are going ahead with a probe of the building, which should yield some valuable information on the integrity of the structure. The Catholic Archdiocese has given us unconditional support for this, which is encouraging.

100 Edmontonians of the Century

– As you will see in the ensuing article, four members of our community have been declared "Edmontonians of the Century" by the City's Centennial 2004 committee. I worked along with Gayle Tallman of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton to nominate ten of our most accomplished and significant community members for this honour, and to our delight, four were picked. They will be honoured at a ceremony on October 6th, and will be immortalized in a book published by the committee. Mazel Tov to them and their families!

— Debby Shoctor

יהודה

HERITAGE

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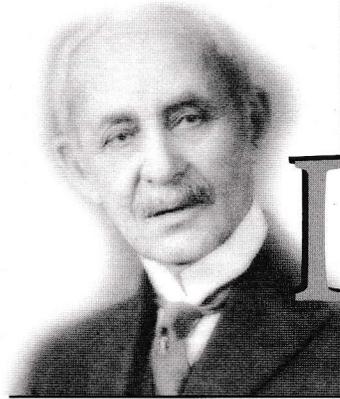
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DO YOU REMEMBER THE DOMION BOTTLING WORKS?

We are looking for photos of the old Dominion Bottling Works on 95th Street for our documentary film. If you have any artifacts, photos, memories, etc. having to do with this building, please contact the office at: 489-2809.

FROM THE ARCHIVES...

The following article appeared in "The Jew in Canada: A Complete Record of Canadian Jewry From the Days of the French Regime to the Present Time", compiled and edited by Arthur Daniel Hart, descendent of Aaron Hart, the first Jew to settle in Canada. It was published in 1926 by Jewish Publications, Limited in Toronto. It is a recent addition to our collection.



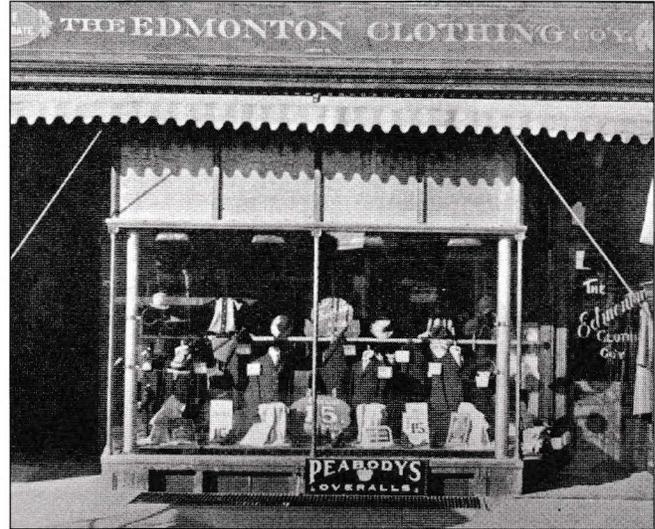
JAHSENA Archives.

WILLIAM "BOSS" DIAMOND

"William Diamond, one of the first Jews to settle in the Prairie Provinces, and one of the most highly respected citizens of Edmonton, was born in Wilna, Russian Poland, on January 1st, 1863, the son of the late Isaac Diamond. He received his education in Poland, and went to New York in 1888. In 1892, he moved to Calgary, where his brother Jacob, the first Jewish settler in Alberta, was located, Calgary had, at that time, a population of less than three

thousand souls. He started a clothing business on a small scale, and conducted this until 1906 when he moved to Edmonton, where a branch of his business had been opened some years previously under the management of Mr. Charles Benjamin. Mr. Diamond has since resided in Edmonton, but retains his interest in the Calgary store, which today is the largest clothing business in the Prairie Provinces, and which for the past eighteen years, has been under the management of Mr. Charles Benjamin.

Mr. Diamond is justly regarded as the outstanding Jew of Alberta. He is the leader of all communal undertakings in his locality, irrespective of race or creed. Mr. Diamond donated the site and supervised the building of the synagogue in Edmonton, and he has been President of the congregation ever since its formation. He is a past officer of the Edmonton



City of Edmonton Archives

The Edmonton Clothing Company's Store, 215 Jasper Ave. Ease, circa 1912, owned by William Diamond.

Lodge, Independent Order of B'nai Brith, and his assistance and advice is sought in all undertakings tending to the betterment of the community. He is an ardent Zionist, and takes a deep and active interest in this movement. Edmonton is held up as an example of what a united community can do in the way of raising funds for all worthwhile causes, and no one is more

responsible for the results they have accomplished, than William Diamond. He has the faculty of selecting the right assistants in his philanthropic work, and he himself sets an example that is an inspiration to leaders in other communities. In March 1892, he was married to Miss Liza Margolis of Minsk, Russia, and he has one daughter, Miss Ruth Diamond."



JAHSENA Archives. Gift of Ethel Fried.

William and Liza Diamond and their daughter Ruth, circa 1940.

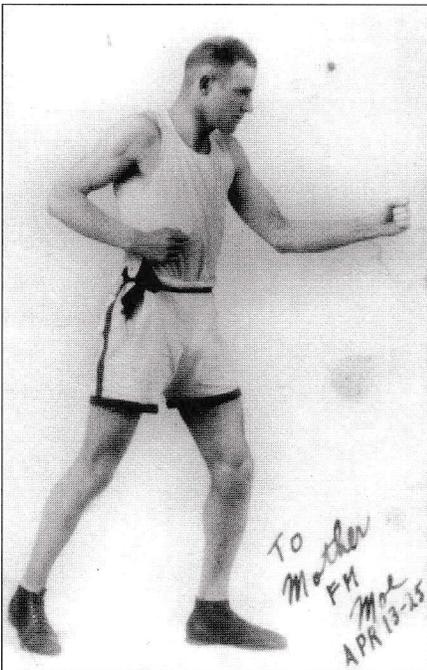
(Top of page) Mr. William "Boss" Diamond.



EDMONTON'S JEWISH BOXERS & WRESTLERS

MORRIS ROSE AND CECIL "TIGER" GOLDSTICK

JAHSENA Archives. Gift of Violet Owen.



Morris Rose, 1925.

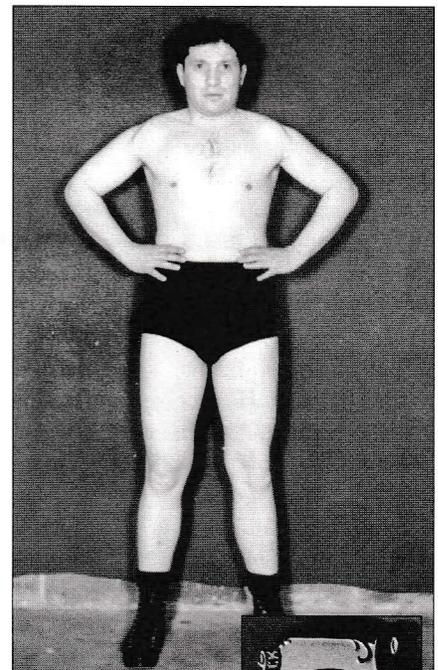
MORRIS ROSE was born in Montreal, Canada in 1899. He was the youngest of four children. Morris' mother was an independant woman who left her family when they were still young, and travelled to British Palestine to live in the early 1920s. Morris took a job with the CPR as a telegraph operator and moved to Edmonton. He was an amateur boxer, and earned a medal in his class in 1925. In 1927, he

married Bella Nelson in Edmonton, and they had three children: June, Violet and Allan. Beginning in 1954, Bella owned and operated the Jane Brooks ladieswear stores on 102 St. and Jasper Ave. Morris died at the age of 61. Daughter Violet became an artist and still lives in Edmonton with her husband, Peter Owen.

CECIL "TIGER" GOLDSTICK,

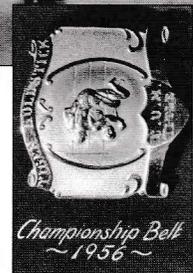
the son of Edmonton's first Rabbi, Hyman Goldstick, was born in Edson, Alberta in 1915. The Goldstick family moved to Edmonton in 1929, where Tiger continued his education, eventually studying at the University of Alberta.

The outbreak of the Second World War led Tiger to the navy, where he spent 1 1/2 years at sea aboard the troop-carrier Prince Rupbert. The ship left Pearl Harbour with Tiger on board just days before the Japanese attacked. As Tiger said, "We shared the ocean with the enemy. They took the bottom half. We took the top half." It was in the navy that the Tiger got his nickname. "I used to wrestle in the navy and Gord Grayson said I needed a name. One day he introduced me as the Tiger of Western Canada. They've called me that ever



Cecil "Tiger" Goldstick, circa 1941.

since." Tiger was the Canadian Navy's lightweight wrestling champion for three consecutive years from 1941 through 1943. In 1956, he won the C.U.M. Championship Belt for wrestling. He later served for many years on Edmonton's Boxing and Wrestling Commission, and was inducted into their hall of fame in 1983.



JAHSENA Archives. Gift of Tiger Goldstick.

JAHSENA Archives. Gift of Tiger Goldstick.

(above inset) Championship Wrestling Belt awarded to Tiger Goldstick, 1956.



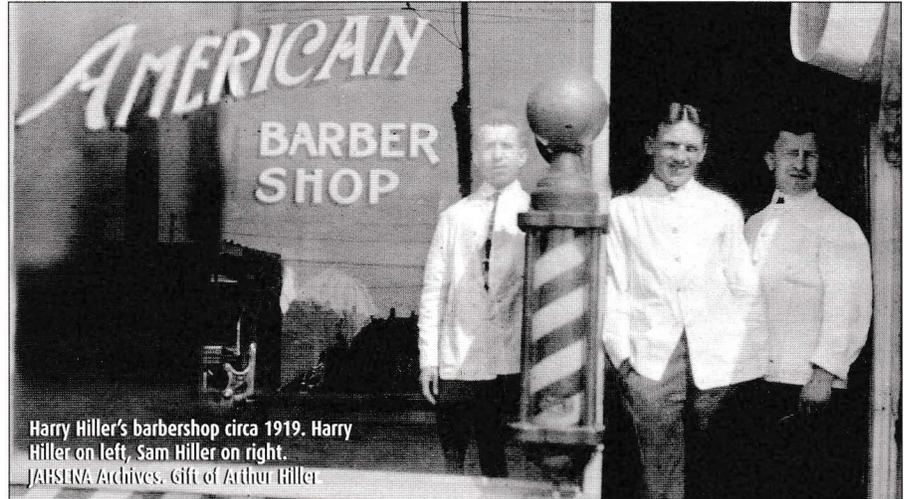
Discovering Images of our Past: A Documentary Takes Shape

by DAN KAUFFMAN, President, JAHSENA

It's been a voyage of discovery — opening a window of sorts — as our researcher Reevan Dolgoy and myself explore the multitude of images discovered at Provincial, City and JAHSENA archives from which to choose in preparing this exciting documentary on the early life of our Jewish community: “A LEGACY REMEMBERED”

How far back can we trace our roots? Try 1893 when Abe Cristall came up to Edmonton (on his way to Seattle from a homestead in Oxbow, Saskatchewan) for a “look-see” and decided to settle here. We see what he saw, thanks to some vivid images of a dusty prairie settlement.

Harry Hiller, living in New York, was told that the streets of Edmonton were “paved with gold” and he brought his family here in 1912, set up the American Barber Shop on 101st street and went into business. Thanks to some wonderful images donated to us by his son, Hollywood producer Arthur Hiller, we can see the barber shop, just one of many small business shops on what was to become a centre of Jewish entrepreneurship on 101st street. Over the 50 to 60 years of the street's existence, it resounded with the accented voices of these new English speakers, selling goods in a language that was foreign to them. Archival images convey a sense of the street and many of the Jewish



Harry Hiller's barbershop circa 1919. Harry Hiller on left, Sam Hiller on right.
JAHSENA Archives, Gift of Arthur Hiller

businessmen and women who managed to make a living here in those early days.

Images, too, help us connect with our first Rabbi, Hyman Goldstick and we are able to read his credentials concerning his ability to perform ritual circumcision.

We look at the small towns and communities and here, too, we have a sense of the struggle of many Jewish families to maintain their identity as reflected in the images of dusty prairie villages.

We are reminded of the strong sense of community here as we look at images of family celebrations, bar mitzvahs, weddings, and Jewish holidays. Social and recreational events that speak to our past and remind us of our roots. Arthur

Hiller reflects: “My parents introduced me to my love of theatre. But they also introduced me to moral values, to love and compassion and respect and responsibility.”

As we select the best of the images we have found and begin the editing process, these photographs provide a strong, dramatic reminder of the importance of preserving our past heritage. This documentary will be JAHSENA'S gift to our community and Reevan and I are delighted to meet the challenge it presents. We hope to have the project completed by early summer, and to premiere it on Sunday, August 29th at the Provincial Museum.

— Dan Kauffman, President, JAHSENA

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ONLY 40 COPIES of our history book are left! YES!

Only 40 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!

The following is an excerpt from an oral history interview conducted with Dr. Bernard Snell on March 1st, 2001 by Peter Owen. Dr. Snell passed away this April at the Age of 84.

DR. BERNARD SNELL



Dr. Bernard Snell in Naval uniform, 1944.

JAHSENA Archives

“It is March 1st, 2001. My name is Peter Owen and I am at the very beautiful home of Dr. Bernard Snell here in Edmonton. How are you, Bernard?”

I am well, thank you, Peter...

And where were you born?

Born in Scotland, in Glasgow in 1919.

Right. Have you every attempted to trace the roots of the Snell family back some decades or centuries?

Yes. I haven't done so, but my daughter Linda did so and she has information going back to the beginning of the 19th century. My father was born

called Gdynia. I don't know whether the town still exists or not. ...It's not far from Krakow.

And what about the name ‘Snell’? Do you know if it had been something else?

Yes...I had always thought the family name was ‘Schnell’, but I found out from my cousin that it was ‘Schnall’ — with an ‘a’, not an ‘e’. He also had done some tracing back of our family, back to the same area, so I learned a lot from him about my background...I don't know where my grandmother was born, on my father's side, but she died when my father was a little boy and so I don't really know anything about her. My mother was born also in the same place, in Gdynia, which my father's grandfather had been born in but in 1895 she came to Scotland, sometime before World War I, and married my father just at the beginning of World War I.

I'm sorry. You mentioned London.

My father was born in London but moved. Actually, my father had a rather interesting life. He joined the British army at the age of fourteen. He told them he was older, I gather, and served in the South African War and then came back to Britain and moved to Scotland. When my mother came to Scotland they met and he married her. Then he joined the army again in the First World War. He was a private in the Boer War, a sergeant in the First World War. In the Second World War he joined the Home Guard and became a captain in a rocket battery — anti-aircraft battery. So, it took him 45 years to get his commission!...

What was your father's occupation?

My father owned a wholesale warehouse but he always had an idea in his mind that the only place to make real money was in the United States, and so in the mid-1920s the family emigrated to New York. Everything was OK until the big depression

when my father lost every penny he had and in the mid-1930s he returned and took us back to Scotland. So, I spent about seven or eight years in New York going to school, public school and highschool...

Was it difficult to fit back in to the Scottish ...?

Into Scotland? Yes it was. I thought everything American was the best and greatest in the world and I was going back to an undeveloped country and I found out very quickly that wasn't true.

What about your family's involvement with the Jewish community both in Scotland and in New York and then later on back in Scotland?

My father was involved.... We were members of an Orthodox synagogue in Glasgow. I don't remember the name of it. My father was involved with Jewish charities, both when he had money before we went to the States, and even when he had no money after we went back again.

And did you go to Hebrew school?

I went to Talmud Torah, but Talmud Torah, in my experience, was going to school after school. It wasn't a full-time day school like it is here in Edmonton.

Right. So where did you have your bar mitzvah?

In New York. I went to high school and finished my high school training there and then went to university there. ...I had a sort of negative epiphany, I suppose. When I had my bar mitzvah, I decided I would bench tefillin every day from then on for the rest of my life. And I did so until I was fifteen, and going back to Scotland by ship, I got very seasick and I couldn't do it. And I waited to be struck dead by God and I wasn't. And so I wasn't quite as good a performer as I had been before, after that...



Wedding of Dr. Bernard Snell and Edna Altaras, September 5, 1949, Manchester.

in the U.K., in London, and his father was born in London, but beyond that, my ancestors on my father's side were born in what was then Austria but is now Poland in a little town

And what of your subsequent education beyond high school?

I went to medical school in Glasgow. Graduated in 1943. I volunteered to join the Royal Navy but in my last few weeks of my internship, I became very ill. The diagnosis was made that I had leukemia and whilst I was lying unconscious with 'leukemia', my calling up papers arrived telling me to report for duty with the Royal Navy. My doctor wrote to them and said that I was very seriously ill and would be dead within three weeks. So, they promptly sort of scored me off of their interest and when I recovered and tried to join, they wouldn't take me. So I joined the Merchant Navy instead...

I see. And when did you first sail from full blighty?

We sailed to the United States in 1943 and then in 1944, my ship was requisitioned for, what was called, combined operations, which meant that we were going to participate in the invasion of Normandy. And we did. I was at the Normandy invasion in 1944 and then after that — my ship, by the way, was involved with the landing of Americans at Omaha and Utah Beach, not with the British or Canadians. And the Americans never thought there were any British in the war at all. They didn't realize there was another war going along the coast a bit...And then we came back to England and I went into another ship. Not a troop ship this time but a supply ship and we went out to the Far East, to the Burma theatre. And I spent the rest of the war out there.

Let me go back a little and ask you about your brothers and sisters...

My older brother was a doctor as well. ...And he graduated in 1938. He joined the army right after the war started and he went out to the Far East and was taken prisoner of war by Japanese forces and remained a prisoner for three or four years, whatever the time 'til the end of the war. At first we were notified that he was missing, presumed killed, but then we got a postcard from him.

And what service was he in?

RAMC — he was a captain in the RAMC.

And he survived the prisoner of war?

He survived the war with some terrible disabilities because of his being in the prisoner of war camp, but he died at the age of 66 in 1982.

And you were able to see him and correspond with him just after the war?

When the war ended, I happened to be in Ceylon. And the ship which they were repatriating him from Singapore (he was in Chang Mai at the end of the war, although he had been in the Burma railway before that), but the ship that was repatriating him called in at Colombo and I had

connections with the movement control officials in Colombo and they phoned me and told me that the ship was just coming in and he was on board. So I went on board to meet him and we spent sort of half a day together and he told me all about his experiences. I also tried to get my other brother who also happened to be in Ceylon. He was in the Royal Navy, but he was on the other side of the island and I couldn't contact him in time to bring the three of us together at one time.

But meeting your older brother after all those years must have been an enormously emotionally rewarding experience. What kind of condition was he in?

He was in terrible condition. He had about five or six different tropical diseases. He was extremely undernourished. He weighed about 70 pounds, although his normal weight was about 150 pounds. He was stooped. His gums had receded from his teeth. He looked like an old, old man, although he was only 29. But he made a reasonable recovery when he went back to the U.K. And he came to Canada as well. He finished up by being the Director of Preventive Health Services for the Province of Manitoba...

So he established himself in his profession? And your other brother?

My other brother ...became a medical student after the war started. When my older brother disappeared as a prisoner, my younger brother decided he couldn't stay out of the war so he joined the Royal Navy and became an air crew in the Fleet, the Royal Naval Air Service and he was stationed at Trincomalee which is a base on the eastern coast of Ceylon when I met my older brother.

And what ultimately happened to him?

Well, he came home and he then went back to medical school and graduated in 1951, I think, and did family practice in England from then until 1992 when he died.

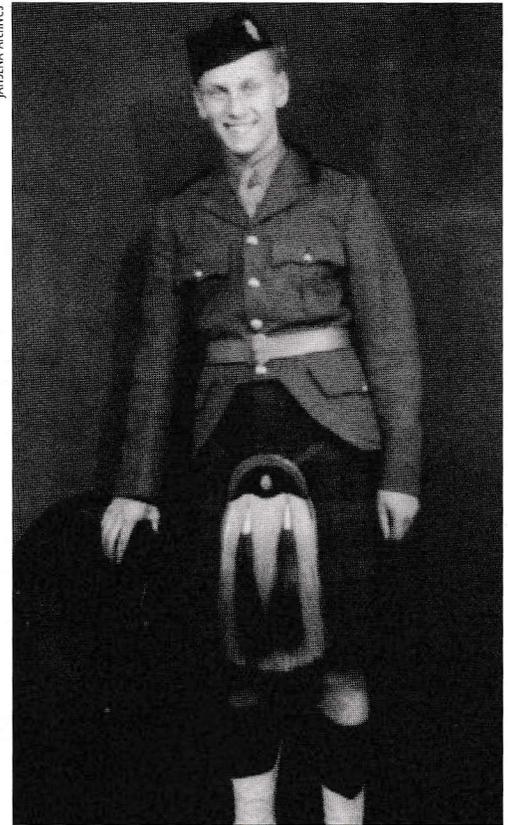
Now I imagine that you were [demobilized] after the war and returned to Scotland?

That's right. Yes. ...I took graduate training in both public health and in internal medicine and infectious diseases and I became a specialist in infectious diseases and practiced in infectious disease hospitals from that time until I left England to come to Canada in 1957.

Anything important happened in that interval?

Oh yes. There was one very important thing, but maybe I should tell you why I came to Canada because in those days, people used to try to make you say that you came to Canada because you couldn't stand the National Health Service. But in fact, I came to Canada because I thought my specialty was dead. All the diseases which I had been trained to treat had been conquered, like poliomyelitis and scarlet fever and measles and

JAMESNA Archives



Bernard Snell, Glasgow, 1939.

chicken pox and diphtheria and typhoid fever and all of those. So I thought, well, I've run into a dead end. I didn't realize it that later on AIDS and Ebola fever were coming along, so I decided to leave that field and I had an opportunity to come to Edmonton. But before that, in 1949, I was practicing in Manchester and I met my wife Edna.

Tell me a little about her background.

Edna is a Sephardi. Her mother was born in Lebanon. Her father was born in England, but his parents came from Syria so they were all of Sephardi origin. She was in the navy in World War II as well. We never met when we were in the navy, we only met afterwards, and I met her and I became friendly, became her boyfriend in a very interesting way. In 1948 when the Israeli War of Independence was taking place, a very good friend of mine came to me. We had been to a movie a few weeks before and Edna was his girlfriend at that movie and I was with some other girl. But, he came to me and said he would like me, if possible, to immunize him against typhus. I said, "Why?" and he said, "Well, everybody who is volunteering to go and fight in Israel has to be immunized against typhus." I said, "Well, I can't do that publicly because that would not be approved by the British." He said,

continued on page 8

Dr. Bernard Snell*Continued from page 5*

"That's right." He said, "Could you do it privately?" So I said, "I'll try." He said, "It's not only me. It's 21 other volunteers — we all need immunization." And so I said, "OK, I'll try to get the typhus doses and I happened to be connected with that field of medicine and I was able to get the only typhus vaccines that were available in England at the time, for 22 people and I immunized all of them and off they went. But before they left, he said, "How much do I owe you?" And I said, "You don't owe me anything." And he said, "Oh, I must give you something." So I said, "Well, give me the telephone number of the girl that you had gone to the movies with because I liked her very much." So, she cost me 22 doses of typhus.

And then, in the due course of time, you became engaged and married.

We married in 1949...In Manchester...In the Sephardi synagogue.

Right, and you continued to live there for another five years.

Well, I left and went from Manchester to Sheffield where I stayed until 1957...We had two children. One born in Manchester — Linda, and one born in Sheffield - Lauren.

Now tell me this, Bernard — what of all the places in the world prompted you to come to Edmonton?

Well, whilst I was being disillusioned about the future of infectious diseases, I came across an advertisement offering a job as Assistant Medical Director at the University of Alberta Hospital. ..

Now, at that time, did you have any idea whatever about your life in Western Canada generally and Edmonton in particular? Had you made inquiries...?

Not really. I realized it would be cold, but I didn't know what 'be cold' really meant. And I thought it was a very, sort of a way, back of beyond. There would be nothing here and I was surprised to find there was a lot here. I had a problem. I didn't know whether Edna would want to come, but she became very biblical on me when I said, "Will you come with me to Edmonton, Alberta?" And she said, "Wither thou goest, I will go." And that was it. There was no discussion about it.

A true Sephardic!

That's right!

...I had two very interesting experiences — both of them due to Max Cantor. The first one ...

Max, having been at that time, the Chief Coroner...of the Province of Alberta.

JAHSENA Archives

**Dr. Bernard and Edna Snell, 1986**

But, when I came to Edmonton I moved into digs in a house not far from the University Hospital and the lady who owned the house asked me one day if I would take her to church. And I told her I didn't go to church because I wasn't a Christian — that I'm a Jew. And she said, "Oh, my God", she said, "Do you know any Jews in Edmonton?". I said, "No, I don't know anybody in Edmonton". "This isn't good enough", she said. So she phoned Max Cantor and told — not Max, Edith Cantor — and told her that there was a young doctor come from Scotland and he was Jewish and he didn't know any Jews, would they come and get him. So they came and got me and they took me to, I think it was a bat mitzvah, of Hymie -I can't remember his surname — he had a son and a daughter. The son is now a urologist and the daughter lives in London, Ontario. And the house is now the Lieutenant Governor's house.

Oh, the Wieslers...

Wiesler — that's right...So, my first introduction to the Jewish community was at a Wiesler bat mitzvah and that was really the start of things. The Jewish community was very, very warm and welcoming and I found myself a part of the community very quickly.

And you, I believe, became a member of the Beth Shalom congregation?

I became a member of the Beth Shalom ...

How did that happen, given your orthodox upbringing?

I really was not orthodox. I was Sephardi at that point, I mean as far the synagogue were concerned. And I didn't know much — very much difference between orthodox and conservative and the Cantors were members of the Beth Shalom, so I joined where they were. I find that you remember that time as well. In

fact, we were both on the board of Beth Shalom at some point...

In those days there was still some element of anti-Semitism. I don't know whether the days of the Jewish quota in medical school had passed by then, but there certainly was in the '40's.

...I remember going to see many hospitals in the United States, but also, particularly to the Toronto General Hospital. And, once I was in Toronto, I had been told to visit with the Chief Executive Officer of the Mount Sinai Hospital, but I had no connections with him, so I had to make my connections when I was in Toronto. I asked the CEO of the Toronto General if he would contact this man for me so I could meet him and he said, "Mount Sinai? Where is that?" And then he said, "This man? Never heard of him." And he just wouldn't do anything. After he left, his assistant told me that he wouldn't recognize any Jews in medicine, but they could make the contacts for me. So, there was obviously a lot of anti-Semitism still in the system at that point, although it was very rapidly disappearing.

So, how did it become apparent that the hospital facilities were or would soon become inadequate?

We had a dream. We had a sort of a concept of developing a Health Science Centre. But the initial concept was to develop a Health Science Centre consisting of four or five faculties of the university and the University Hospital, all as one unit and so the Dean of Medicine, as he then was — Walter Mackenzie at that time had become the Dean of Medicine — he and his assistant who was Tim Cameron, and the Chairman of the Department of Surgery — at that point it was Bob McBeth — we got together and we developed a plan which we presented to the Board of Governors of the hospital and of the university and they approved it — to build this multi, multi-faculty Health Sciences Centre. And we presented it to the government and they turned it down.

Now, whose government was in power then?

At that time it was the Manning government. But, they told us that they would consider a proposal in relation to the University Hospital on its own and so I set to develop a proposal to create a Health Sciences Centre which is now in existence and working with the medical school people, but it was to be a hospital deal and we got approval from the Manning government. They had turned us down three or four times in a row because of the size of the proposal, but as we had cut it back and cut it back and cut it back, eventually they gave approval and I had a

continued on page 7

Dr. Bernard Snell

Continued from page 6

letter of approval from Ernest Manning himself, and so we started to develop the plans to build a building. They put up the hoardings all around the site and then there was an election in the province and a Conservative government was elected.

That was '71.

'71 — and the first thing they did was cancel the project. So my job was then to go and persuade Mr. Lougheed that it was a worthwhile project and that took me about a year, but at the end of that, this government, the Conservative government, decided to approve it as well but we had to start planning all over again. But with his support, the project did go forward.

Did you get to know Peter Lougheed pretty well?

...He was Leader of the Opposition when I first met him and he became a good friend over time. And also I had a lot of professional relationships with him which were not quite as smooth as the friendship relations because he was very concerned about the cost of the project which escalated substantially.

And the complex is an astounding one now, isn't it. It is, as you said, world class. Has it lived up to expectations?

I think it's more than lived up to expectations because, you know, we can say what we like about buildings, it's not buildings which create great centres, it's people. But this building gave people the

opportunity to do the things that they're doing and today, in many fields, Edmonton is way up there in the world class, particularly in things like cardiovascular surgery, neurosurgery, urology, and pediatrics. Even today, the pediatric services developing in the Health Sciences Centre are bringing us to the top quality of pediatrics in the continent...

So, I think that those (anti-semitic) sentiments had pretty well vanished certainly by the late '70's and '80's.

Yes, I know that when I became Medical Director, Assistant Medical Director, I didn't know that there were any Jews on the Faculty of Medicine or on the hospital staff. Then one of them, a man by the name of Joe Dworkin, asked me to go to a football game with him. And, it was only then that I found out that he was Jewish. And there were a couple of other Jews on the medical staff but before then there was no way a Jew could get on the medical staff...

Yes, right. So, ultimately you retired from your job at the hospital.

That's right. Oh, by the way, you were saying about anything else. When I was being considered for the appointment as president of the hospital, several of my friends — members of the Jewish community, and eminent members — told me there was no way that they would appoint a Jew as president of the University Hospital. And in fact one of them, a man who you know very well and I know very well but I

won't mention his name, offered to intercede for me with the Premier and I said, "No thank you". I didn't want his intercession and, in fact, there was no issue at all about it. I think that whatever anti-Semitism had existed before had, in fact, been diluted out of existence by then...Eventually I was appointed as Executive Director of the Edmonton Children's Hospital — Northern Alberta Children's Hospital, and that was also a temporary position. The hospital didn't exist, but my job was to persuade all the pediatricians to support it. It was a very difficult job. They all wanted to continue practicing where they were.

It was, in today's terminology, a 'virtual hospital'.

A virtual hospital. And I came up with a concept of a hospital within a hospital and I persuaded Nancy Betkowski, who was then the Minister of Health, that this was the right way to go. She agreed, but she said I first of all had to get the pediatricians to support it and then she would persuade the premier, who was Mr. Getty, to support it. And the trouble was that Getty had promised us money to build an independent hospital, but I knew and she knew that he couldn't deliver on that promise, so we finally got her agreement and then just after that there was this complete change in the organization of the health system and a regional board took over the responsibility for both the University Hospital and whatever might become of a children's hospital, and that children's hospital is just about completed now — the Stollery Centre.

That's good. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell posterity about your years? Some of the things that may have changed your life, other than those that we've already mentioned.

No. But that you say some general things, in spite of my talking a little bit about anti-Semitism, I found that Edmonton, in both the non-Jewish and Jewish communities have been extremely warm and welcoming. It's, you know, something which I did not find living in various communities in England. And I've been very impressed with that.

Amongst the questions that we are supposed to ask, if appropriate, is what is the key lesson you've learned from life that you would want others to know? I'm not sure that I would be able to answer that, but would you take a shot at it?

I'll take a shot at it and maybe in saying it I might be sort of patting myself on the back. But, I found that nothing is impossible. You know, during the building of the Health Sciences Centre and with the plans to build a Health Sciences Centre, everybody had given up on it except me. And I had to keep jockeying people along and say, "We'll eventually get it — let's keep working at it, and keep working at it, and eventually, we did get it. So what I think I've learned from that is, Don't give up. Even when things seem to be impossible.

I think that's a very fine and optimistic note on which to end this interview and I thank you very much."

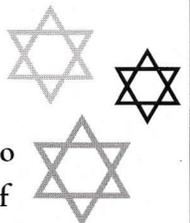


CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

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 Shoctor at 489-2809.

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.



JAHSENA Recent Acquisitions

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

Bushewsky Family, personal collection, including Yiddish records and books, miscellaneous text, and The Canadian Jewish Yearbook, 1939-1940.

Maccabi Canada, Edmonton Section, donated by Howie Sniderman. Records of the organization from 1985 - 2002.

Collection of Trophies and Plaques belonging to George Levine, donated by David Levine. Includes items commemorating George's chairmanship of the Jewish Community Council in 1956-57; his chairmanship of UJA in 1965, and of his involvement in B'nai Brith Edmonton Lodge and with the Boy Scouts.

"Web of Hate: Inside Canada's Far Right Network", by Warren Kinsella, 1994. Harper Collins, 386 pgs. Gift of Deborah Glaser Shoctor.

"Allergy in Childhood" by Jerome Glaser, 1956, Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 529 pgs. Gift of Deborah Glaser Shoctor.

"An Insider's Account of the United Way Scandal: What Went Wrong and Why," by John S. Glaser. 1994, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 274 pgs. Gift of Deborah Glaser Shoctor.

"Nuclear Waste in Sweden: The Problem is not Solved!" by Miles Goldstick et al. 1988, Upsalla: The People's Movement Against Nuclear Power and Weapons, 84 pgs. Gift of Marshall Shoctor.

Personal collection of Sharon Cantor Abbott, including 19 photographs and numerous newspaper articles about her father, Dr. Max Cantor, who served as Provincial Coroner for over 30 years, and her mother, Edith Cantor, socialite and amateur actress.

Dr. Bernie Adler, personal collection, relating to Dr. Adler's voluntary activities in the Jewish and General communities, particularly the University of Alberta Alumni Association and Dental Alumni Association, Sigma Alpha Mu, and Beth Israel Synagogue Men's Club. 19 photographs and 3 cm. Text.

"Two-Gun Cohen: Morris Cohen, East-End Jewish Boy, became a Chinese General," by Charles Drage. Panther Book of the Month No. 1. Panther: London, 1956, 252 pgs. Paperback. Donated by John Glaser.

"Two-Gun Cohen: The incredible true story of a Yiddish-Speaking General who saved the life of Sun Yat-sen, led the Chinese Army and became, 'The Diplomatic and Financial Force Behind Modern China.'" By Laurence Sharpe. From: "The Book Peddler", pgs. 40-42. Donated by John Glaser.

"The Edmonton Jewish Cemetery Directory by Rows and Plots" compiled and edited and donated by Cory Felber.

"Peoples of Alberta: Portraits of Cultural Diversity", edited by Howad and Tamara Palmer. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie books, 1985. 551 pgs.

Jewish Federation of Edmonton: 16.2 m of records from UJA, JCC, Federation, Jewish Community Council and Hillcrest Foundation dating from the 1970s-1990s. Scheduled Accession.

Neil Loomer: three family photos.

Rodnunsky family: three family photos.

Dr. Eric Schloss: five Bar Mitzvah photos, 1951.

Oral Histories: Tammy Greenberg, and Norma Nozick, interviewed by Brandy Graesser.

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.

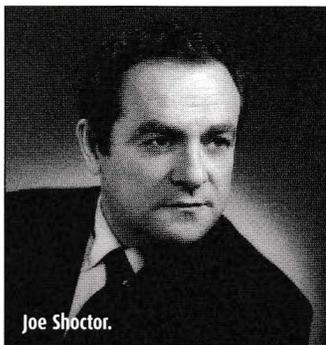
At the JCC...

Currently on display at the JCC you will find an exhibit of recently donated materials relating to the Hillcrest Foundation. This was an early incarnation of the current Jewish Community Centre on 156 St. Originally the Hillcrest Country Club, the building was purchased by members of the Jewish Community including Marvin Weisler, Irv Kipnes and Larry Rollingher in the early 1970s. It originally became the home for the Edmonton Jewish Community Council and the Edmonton Jewish Youth Centre. It later served as host to many other Jewish organizations, including Temple Beth Ora, United Jewish Appeal, the Shalom Playschool, Daycamp Shalom, Gary's Kosher restaurant, Edmonton Hadassah-WIZO, the Edmonton offices of the Jewish National Fund, B'nai Brith Youth Organization, B'nai Brith Western Regional offices, Edmonton Jewish Life, Chabad Hebrew School, National Council of Jewish Women, and many others over the years, including our own Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta.

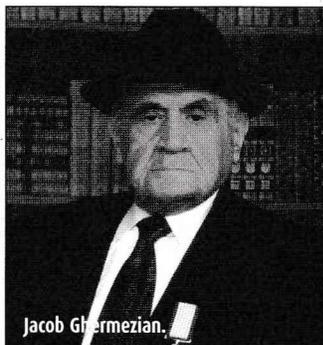
EDMONTONIANS OF THE CENTURY

Four members of Edmonton's Jewish Community have been chosen as members of the "100 Edmontonians of the Century" by the City's *Celebrate 2004* committee. The list was announced at a City Hall ceremony on Monday, May 3, 2004.

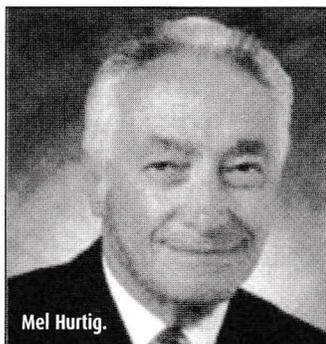
This is part of the City's 100th anniversary celebrations, which will culminate in October of this year. The chosen four, Joe Shoctor, Mel Hurtig, Jacob Ghermezian and Henry Singer, were nominated through a joint effort on the part of Gayle Tallman Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, and Debby Shoctor, Archivist of the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta. They submitted a list of ten prominent Jewish community members to the Committee, of which four entrants were chosen for the final 100. Two of the names were also nominated by



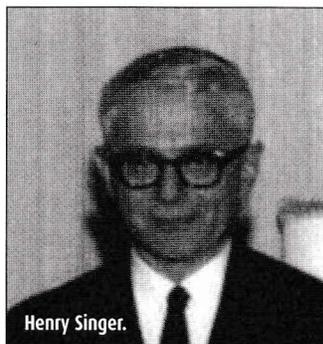
Joe Shoctor.



Jacob Ghermezian.



Mel Hurtig.



Henry Singer.

All photos JAHSENA Archives.

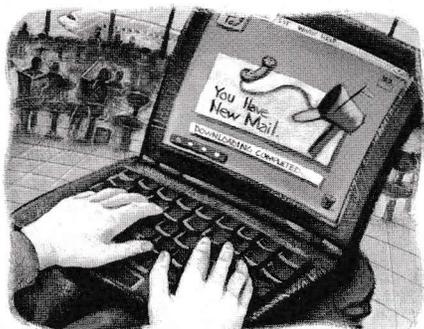
others. A total of 900 names were submitted by the community as a whole.

The final 100 will appear, along with their photos and bios, in a book to celebrate the event, to be published in October. In addition, the names of all 900 nominees will be included. Wendy

Andrews, chairman of the committee, said at the press conference, "As we celebrate our first 100 years it is important to recognize that our city, our province, our country, and even the world would not have been the same without them." *Celebrate 2004* committee chair Ralph

Young said that the common thread was that each person on the list made a lasting, significant contribution that changed the city for the better.

The list covered people from every area of endeavour: the arts, culture, business, medicine, voluntarism, sports, and humanitarianism. Joe Shoctor will be remembered for his founding of the Citadel Theatre, the Edmonton Eskimos, and the Downtown Development Corporation. Mel Hurtig made an indelible mark on the Canadian publishing industry with his *Canadian Encyclopaedia* and his many books, and on the political landscape with his *Council of Canadians*. Jacob Ghermezian changed the face of Edmonton with West Edmonton Mall, and of the Jewish community with the founding of Menorah Academy. Henry Singer was a business leader, Jewish community leader and sportsman, also instrumental in the founding of Klondike Days and the revival of the Edmonton Eskimos.



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, you will find the holdings of JAHSENA listed on their database. We currently have over 165 fonds-level descriptions listed on their searchable fonds-level database. In Alberta In Sight, the photo database, we have over 395 photos digitized. In Alberta In Word, there are over 400 digitized documents. While you're on the web, check out our own site at www.jahsena.org. And please note that our email address has changed to jahsena@shaw.ca.

THESE PHOTOS WERE RECENTLY DONATED TO OUR ARCHIVES

Bar Mitzvah of Dr. Eric Schloss, 1951. The first Bar Mitzvah held in the newly-erected Beth Shalom Synagogue was that of Dr. Eric Schloss, son of Mr. & Mrs. Al Schloss of Vegreville. JAHSENA Archives. Photo donated by Dr. Eric Schloss.



Mickey Dlin with Yitzhak Rabin and Yigal Allon. JAHSENA Archives. Photo donated by Neil Loomer.



Rabbi Louis L. Sacks of Edmonton Beth Shalom Synagogue with David Ben Gurion and unknown woman, September 18, 1957. JAHSENA Archives. Photo donated by Neil Loomer.

WE NEED YOU AS A MEMBER OF JAHSENA!

PLEASE HELP US PRESERVE OUR HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE!

Membership in JAHSENA costs as little as \$18 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.

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