



DISCOVERY

The Journal of the

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JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

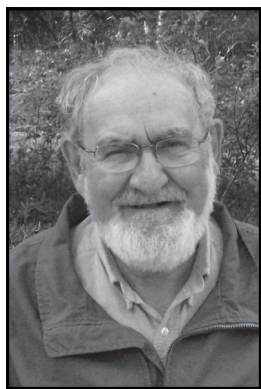
VOLUME 23, No. 1

WINTER 2013

President's Message

Betty Sherwood

This January marked the first anniversary of the passing of Jack Switzer^{z"l}, our past president, mentor and friend. In October, our Annual General Meeting program was dedicated to Jack and this winter we held a series of three Jack Switzer Memorial Research Workshops, highlighting the resources in the Glenbow Archives and in the Jay and Barbara Joffe Archives of the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta. You can read more about these events in this issue.



Jack Switzer, on his 70th birthday, June, 2007. Source: Shauna Switzer JHSSA #2684

On May 13, 2013 we will dedicate an entire evening to honour the memory of Jack Switzer (1937–2012). In his working life Jack taught English and Marketing to hundreds of appreciative students at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, but throughout his life he always found time to enjoy fishing, travelling, reading and listening to classical and Yiddish music.

Upon his retirement Jack turned his attention to the stories of our Jewish community, researching and writing about a wide range of subjects including his own family's history, and local characters and businesses. Jack's phenomenal knowledge and memory for details made him the go-to person for quick and correct answers to questions about local history. As a community leader, Jack was instrumental in the founding of Temple B'nai Tikvah and The Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society.

At our tribute, various speakers will touch on the many aspects of Jack's contribution to Southern Alberta. JHSSA will prepare a bibliography of Jack's historical writings and a multimedia presentation will help to illustrate Jack's life.

Please make every effort to attend and learn more about Jack and his significant contributions to our community.

Tribute to Jack Switzer^{z"l}

**Monday, May 13, 2013 at 7:30 pm
Calgary JCC Auditorium**



Memories of I.L. Peretz School

By Maurice Yacowar

The humongous ice cream cones – with flavours unheard of in Leader, Sask. – were a nickel. For 15 cents I got a double feature, a short, a cartoon and four trailers at the Variety, Hitchin' Post or Strand on 8th Ave. E. each Saturday afternoon. The extra dime on my allowance got me a Cherry Blossom or Bridge Mixture. That was the Good Life to which our parents, Sam and Sophie Yacowar, brought my older sister Ruthie and me when we moved to Calgary in August, 1950. That September I started Grade III at the I.L. Peretz School.

Back then I always resented that I had to walk four blocks to and from school, when Victoria Elementary was just a kitty corner away. One blizzard morn I was so frozen and angry that when I got to the Peretz gate I turned back and walked home. "It's too cold for me to walk to school," I wailed. My mother thawed me out, gave me a hot lunch, then sent me back for the afternoon. But now I feel nothing but gratitude for my Peretz experience.

I never quite understood how my three years of day study at Peretz gave me such a head start. After all, we had only half a day to cover the curriculum in which the public system invested the whole shot. The rest was spent on Yiddish, history, culture and Hebrew. Perhaps our teachers were better, or we perforce used our time more efficiently. Whatever the reason, when I graduated to Victoria



Ben Zaretsky, I.L. Peretz school teacher, from 1939-40 graduating class photo. Photographer: Tigerstedt Studio. JHSSA #91

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Memories of I.L. Peretz School

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School for Grade VI and Connaught for Grade VII, I was at no disadvantage whatever.

My two most memorable day teachers at Peretz were Lerrer Zaretsky and Lerrer Heilik. They were both very cultured men, dedicated teachers, very worldly and understanding. I was a compulsive caricaturist and I remember Lerrer Heilik in particular pausing to give me some constructive advice. His bar mitzvah gift to me was an exciting little hardcover on Rembrandt (my first art book!).

My most embarrassing memory of Lerrer Zaretsky was the time he confiscated a comic book I was furtively reading in class. I was walking home for lunch with my friend Melvin Kaider (anyone know where he is now?) and I complained: "Dumb Zaretsky stole my comic." Now, Lerrer Zaretsky was a short man. Very short. Figure a fireplug and a half. His legs were very short. And we had left the school maybe five minutes. I spoke with full confidence he could never have come within earshot. But no sooner did I speak than I felt his delicate leather glove-finger on my face and I heard him say: "Dumb Zaretsky, eh?" He was short but he obviously strolled like the Roadrunner. Lerrer Zaretsky was a very good friend of my mother. For days I waited for her punishment of my disrespect. But remember? I said he was a very worldly and understanding man? I learned that then. He never ratted me out.

From those classes I remember the Blumes twins, Mark and Morley, and the cute Dena Tabachnik a year behind me, Sam Switzer, a spirited leader in the playground, and my first secret heartthrob, Janice Smith. My best friends were twins Susan and Morris Aizenman, because they lived a couple blocks from our rooming house, which was on the southwest corner of 12th Ave. and 3rd St. E. Though I obviously knew Lila and Reva Miller, I spent more time with their mother Doris from her work at Jaffe's famous used book store. In my university and away years, my mother would complain Doris saw more of me than she did. Once she let me into the Jaffe's hallowed

basement storage where I scored a few real treasures.

But my school heroes were David Horodezky and Sheldon Chumir. They were the school's star athletes. Together they'd dominate the noon and recess scrub baseball games. They'd keep hitting homers into the auto-parts junkyard next door and the rest of us would have to go hunt for the ball. When I got to Central High, Sheldon was a star fullback on the provincial champion high school football team, while Dave burned up the boards for the Crescent Heights basketball team.

Ruthie and I both went to night school at Peretz for a year after our day classes ran out. That's when I met the person who provided the model for my later efforts at teaching. Lerrer Eichler came to Calgary as a young man. He was handsome, witty, amusing, sharp, dashing – even then. There are those who know him as Aron, but somehow that seems to me his nickname. He came as Lerrer Eichler, he imprinted on me as Lerrer Eichler, and that he stays. I don't know if I've ever called him Aron. Not that he ever stood on ceremony or formality. To the contrary, he was the first playful, easily engaging teacher I ever met. He played spirited games of ping pong with us and happily adjudicated our games from the sideline. (Curses. I never could handle Henry Krygier's weird spin serve.) He always found ways to make our studies fun. He brought in a kind of bingo game that used Yiddish adages, like "*Foon al chet vert min nisht fet.*" One evening class was almost entirely devoted to his discussion with Sheldon about the war threat in Formosa. Sheldon had been reading about it and wanted to debate it, so we did. That was my introduction to world affairs. Lerrer Eichler knew that the best way to teach us is to raise our curiosity, cultivate our interests and make the whole business a pleasure. As it turned out, he was my one course in how to teach.

The Peretz School was also the community centre back then. We had holiday festivities, banquets, Purim balls, weddings, everything, in the downstairs gym. Hy Sheinin, aka Sandy's dad, suited 16 of us out in fancy western wear for our square dance exhibition there. Reta Gail Fisherman was my partner. I often wonder where she is and if her shins have recovered.

The Pearlman family were perhaps the school's prime patrons. Any celebration there abounded with Orange Crush. And Edythe was at the piano not just for the public events but whenever the school's classes needed her. And I still hear Miriam Zysblatt's heartrending recitation of "*In Varshove Ghetto is yetzt choidesh Nissen*".

It was a school. It was a community centre. It was the heartbeat of Calgary Judaism. And of course it embodied and advanced the left-wing humanist values of the great writer himself. Fats Domino got his thrill on Blueberry Hill, but I got so much of my life's start at the Calgary Peretz School.

You think there's a song there?

University of Calgary graduate Maurice (aka Moishe) Yacowar returned to the U of C as Professor of English and Film Studies just in time to retire.



Calgary Jewish School Students c. 1954. Back row, left to right: Miriam Brovender, Mimi Nagler, Rochelle Katzin, Bernice Srolovitz, _ ?, _ ?, Ann Rosenbaum, Susan Aizenman, Aron Eichler (Peretz School teacher), Fred Engle (?), Rachel Horowitz (Calgary Hebrew School teacher), Sheldon Chumir, Janice Smith, Graham Sattin, Sam Switzer, Henry Krygier, Fred Tabachnik, Allan Zysblatt. Middle row: Bennie Barenholtz, Rick Dvorkin, Allan Himelfarb, Bernie Hoffman, _ ?, Lila Miller, Israel Aizenman, Morris Aizenman, Maurice Yacowar, Ron Pearlman, Morris Bleviss, Bob Kalef. Front row: Harvey Shapiro, Esther Schiff, Zev Schiff, David Eisenstadt, Reva Miller, Sol Gombinsky, Allan Sattin, Shirley Ann Hurov, Estelle Hurov, Janet Brovender, Michael Krygier, Ida Shulder. JHSSA #2296

Smithbilt's Life Lessons for a Kid from Calgary

By David Eisenstadt

So, when your son or daughter says, "I'd like to get a part-time, after-school job and earn my own money," what do you as a parent say?

Well, my folks, the late Max and Bessie Eisenstadt, thought that was a reasonable request from a 14 year old, and while my first part-time job was working Saturdays in my Dad's grocery store, the NU-WAY at 1717 - 17th Ave. SW, I wanted to look for a job on my own and see what it was like to work for "non-family".

But my Dad pre-empted my search and called Smithbilt President Judah Shumiatcher and next thing I knew, I reported for duty at the Smithbilt Hat Co., a Calgary institution on 12th Ave. SW, not far from where we lived. The year was 1958.

I was no stranger to working, having also shined shoes on Saturdays with my cousin Harvey, at the venerable Calgary Shoe Hospital on 8th Ave., founded by my godfather, Uncle Joe Shapiro. That was a fun gig.

But Smithbilt was different. While not a sweatshop, by definition, one certainly worked up a sweat.

I arrived on a Monday after school and met the foreman, a nice, but crusty sort of guy, whose name I forget. He showed me around and I was assigned to the kids' hat area.

Besides the iconic white hat (and lots of other styles), Smithbilt had the children's cowboy hat market sewn up (pardon the pun).

My job was to block those kids' hats – the ones marketed in a rainbow of colours, with rope around the brim and the little ball that you pulled to keep the hat tightly on your head.

I was being "paid by the piece" and my shift was from 4-7pm.

So after getting the "cook's tour" of the plant, I was shown my work area. What I stepped in to was a sea of raw felt hats stacked 25 high, by colour...purple, red, white, green and so on. Next to the felt hats was a rack of wooden blocks, each meant to fit into the crown of the hat.

First decision...pick a size block (6½, 6¾, 7, 7¼, 7½, for example). I would take each hat, invert it into a cauldron-like blocking machine, fit the felt in the centre, insert the block, pull down a very heavy lever and depress a pedal at the base of the machine simultaneously, which released steam to complete the blocking process. I recall that I was to hold the lever in place for about 1 minute, then, withdraw the warm, blocked hat without ripping the brim from the teeth of the machine, and restack for the person "down the line" punching the holes for the rope and ball.

And, then I'd do it all over again.

Did I mention I was paid 25¢ a dozen?

I took my first break after an hour, and then got back at it. By this time, I had really mastered the process and did not ruin any of the hats.



David Eisenstadt. JHSSA #2683

At the end of the second hour the crusty foreman came by and whispered..."Kid, you are working too fast". I stopped and asked him what he meant. He said, "You heard me, slow down; you are going to embarrass us."

Meaning, this 14 year old was setting a pace which the foreman and the other full time workers didn't endorse. By the way, the company was not unionized.

I reminded him that I was being paid piecemeal and needed to produce as much as I could, to earn as much as possible.

That explanation fell on deaf ears.

So, after three hours of working my heart out on day one, I came home and joined my parents and sister Marcia for dinner. They asked about my day and I told them this story.

Dad's advice – listen to the foreman.

He added that if you are ever a boss one day, remember that working-to-rule and union shops have their own rules...and you'll have to learn to play by those rules.

I wondered how the company could stay in business if the staff in the back were actually calling the shots. And, did Mr. Shumiatcher know what was really going on?

In the spirit of celebrating the important role Smithbilt played in Calgary and even Canadian history, this remembrance is not meant to "dis" anyone and despite my experience, I am happy the company thrived and survived and was recognized during Historic Calgary Week. Besides learning how to block hats, I also learned the correct way to manage staff.

Both useful life lessons for any 14 year old.

David Eisenstadt is the founding partner of The Communications Group Inc. (tcgpr). He graduated from the University of Alberta at Calgary in 1966 and has a degree in journalism from Carleton University. He has served as a Senator at the University of Calgary since 2007 and is a Member of the Order of the University of Calgary.

JHSSA welcomes submissions of personal memoirs about Jewish life in Southern Alberta.

JHSSA Tribute Cards for any Occasion

Anyone can support the work of JHSSA by sending our tribute cards to family and friends. The cards, featuring historic photos from the JHSSA collection, can be ordered for as little as \$10. "Chai" donations of \$18 or more are also available. A donation of \$54 can mark a special occasion with the dedication of a new book for our library. A certificate in our *Book of Heritage*, which is on display in the JCC, can be ordered for a donation of \$100.

All donations are tax deductible and count towards potential matching funds for JHSSA from the Alberta Community Spirit grant.

Thank you to the many people who have supported our card fund over the past decades.

To order a card, a book or a certificate, please contact our dedicated volunteer, Carey Smith at careysmith@shaw.ca or submit an order through our website – www.jhssa.org.

Memories of the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation, 1958–1986

**By Sandra Lipton for the
Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta**

[Author's note: This article was produced from interviews with former members of the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation, culling through archival and print information, and memories of my own membership following my marriage, those of my husband who grew up in the synagogue, and my in-laws, of blessed memory, who were very active in the congregation. I am a great niece of one the founding members, Sam (Shaika) Shlafmitz.]

At its annual general meeting on October 29, 2012, the JHSSA presented a tribute to the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation. The program was dedicated to the memory of our former president and long standing board member, Jack Switzer. It came on the heels of the farewell tour, on October 14th, of the former synagogue, which had been slated for demolition to make way for condominiums.

This article is a quick journey through the history of the synagogue.



Eternal light (ner tamid) from Shaarey Tzedec sanctuary, now in Beth Tzedec Heritage collection. Photographer: Sandra Lipton. JHSSA #2680

Beginnings

The roots of the Shaarey Tzedec date back to 1935 when former Congregation House of Jacob members established their own more modern orthodox synagogue, Beth Israel. Modern orthodoxy in the twentieth century referred to a mode of ritual that included late Friday night services, English readings, a sermon delivered in English, a North American educated rabbi, and a philosophy that included strong support for Israel, and also emphasized the importance of secu-

lar knowledge and building bridges to the secular community. While for a time some modern orthodox synagogues did have mixed seating, it was not a feature that defined modern orthodoxy.

In 1951, Beth Israel introduced family seating and a new prayer book and in 1954, officially became affiliated with the Conservative movement. About the same time, a number of Congregation House of Jacob members were unsuccessful in their plans to build a new modern orthodox House of Jacob building. The key players, Leo Sheftel and Shaika Shlafmitz, joined with other community members desiring an alternative to the Beth Israel and the House of Jacob, and established the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation. In March 1958, an executive was appointed and many meetings were held over the following months. Murray Robins (member of the first Shaarey Tzedec board and former president) and Sheila Gurevitch (daughter of founder Leo Sheftel) both recall how the founders of the synagogue went door to door to elicit support. The Shaarey Tzedec, like Beth Israel, held services in the House of Israel community building on 18th Avenue and Centre Street prior to the completion of their own buildings in 1959 and 1960 respectively.

Within a few months of their first meetings, the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation executive put together a proposal to build a syna-

gogue adjacent to the community building. In November 1958, an agreement was struck between the Shaarey Tzedec and the House of Israel Association to erect a synagogue north of the House of Israel. On November 28, 1958, the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation was incorporated and the leadership geared up for the construction of their new building, but not without twice contemplating amalgamation with the Beth Israel to jointly construct a new synagogue!

Amazingly, the modern orthodox Shaarey Tzedec Synagogue was built in just over six months. On April 12, 1959 the sod was turned by Jacob Barron and the building opened for services in October 1959. According to a news report, the heating had not yet been completed but the congregation "endured cold without a murmur". The *Calgary Jewish News* referred to the sanctuary as the "frigid zone". Judy and Phil Parker's December 1959 wedding pictures starkly demonstrate how unfinished the shul was for the first year. New pews installed just hours prior to the wedding and not yet screwed down, squeaked loudly with the movement of their occupants. Much of the interior décor was completed over the next several years through the generous support of members.

In December 1960 a dedication ceremony chaired by Dr. Harry Bercov heralded the official opening of the synagogue. The cornerstone was set by Jacob Barron. The B'nai Brith Boy Scout Troop #84 under the guidance of Sidney Macklin provided a colour guard. Members of the board of directors paraded with the Torah scrolls into the sanctuary where the ceremonies continued with the presentation of the synagogue key to President Leo Sheftel by building chairman Sam Gurevitch, speeches and a cantorial performance by Cantor Israel Stercz assisted by Choirmaster Norman Lipton and the Shaarey Tzedec choir. Among the many clergy in attendance were visiting rabbis from Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, as well as the Chief Rabbi of Western Canada, Rabbi Kravetz. The president of Rabbinic Alumni of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Herschel Schacter, presented the keynote address at the banquet and dance that followed the dedication.

Clergy and Lay Leaders

Shaarey Tzedec's first rabbi was Leonard Buchen. Phil Libin, a former president, recalls how he and his new bride, Harriet Sheftel, had to give up their apartment for the interview weekend so that Rabbi Buchen and his wife could stay within walking distance of services. Rabbi Buchen was followed by Rabbis Benjamin Eisenberg, Lewis Ginsburg, Morris Myerowitz, Abraham Postone, Louis Tuch-



Shaarey Tzedec building exterior, 2012. Photographer: Sandra Lipton. JHSSA #2679

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Memories of the Shaarey Tzedec Congregation

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man, Chaim Schertz and Abraham Witty. Rabbi Postone held the position of Associate Rabbi for over a decade and Aron Eichler and Harry Trattner led High Holy Day auxiliary services for many years.

The synagogue had a series of cantors, some full time and others just for the High Holy Days, including: Michael Mallett, Israel Sterzc, Morris Semigran, Issac Waldman, Elchanon Gelberg, Henry Borenstein, Abraham Gartenhaus, Abraham Chechin, David Hass, Yitzchak Eshel and Fred Mannes. David Kandel served as an assistant cantor and Torah reader for many of the early years.

The first board of directors consisted of Leo Sheftel; president; Louis Belzberg and Bill Polsky, vice presidents; D.A. Dvorkin, treasurer; Murray Robins, recording secretary; Shaika Shlafmitz, financial secretary and Sybil Bercov, Sisterhood president. The entire list of founders and presidents can be found in the 1990 Dedication Book of the Beth Tzedec Synagogue Roll of Honour (Lorraine Glogauer former Sisterhood President is missing from that list).

Dedicated volunteers ensured that religious services operated smoothly. For many years, Shaarey Tzedec was the only synagogue in Calgary holding three daily services.

The chapel was named after Morris Fasman, the daily *minyán* chairman from 1959–1971. Long serving ritual committee chairmen included Leon Gutman (1959–1971) and Norman Lipton (1976–1985). Chaim Well, brother-in-law to Rabbi Eisenberg, served as *shammas* for many years.

Office support staff included Vilma Moore Dubber, Eta Safran, and Mona Rosenbaum.

Architecture and Design

The building, designed by Calgary architects Abugov and Sunderland, has been lauded by architects as “one of Calgary’s architectural treasures.” An exhibition on Calgary modern architecture held in 2000 at the University of Calgary’s Nickle Arts Museum featured the former synagogue, highlighting the wood paneled sanctuary with its floating ceiling. The tent-like front entrance was featured in the 1985 publication *Synagogues of Canada*.

In March 2012, the Calgary Heritage Authority added the Shaar-



Special Service at the Shaarey Tzedec held in honour of the birth of Prince Andrew, February, 1960. Left to right: Leon Gutman, Cantor David Candel (Kandel in our records), Rabbi Leonard Buchen, Nate Safran, Leo Sheftel. JHSSA #2173

ey Tzedec building to its list of Evaluated Historical Resources, noting that the structure is “significant for its stunning and dynamic Modern-style architecture.” Unfortunately, membership on this list does not mean that the building is a protected site.

The many works of religious art donated to the Shaarey Tzedec have been carefully preserved in the Ousher Switzer Heritage Room at Beth Tzedec synagogue.

Religious Celebrations and Other Events

The synagogue choir under the leadership of Norman Lipton was a key part of High Holy Day services for many years. With appreciation to Mel Ksienski, the JHSSA has a video of a Succot Hoshanah Rabah service from the early 1960s. During the quarter century of its existence, the synagogue was the site of many family religious events including circumcisions, redemption of the first-born ceremonies, baby namings, bar/bat mitzvahs and weddings. In 1975, it was reported that the synagogue had approximately 360 family members. For many years, Shaarey Tzedec was the only synagogue in Calgary holding three daily services.

In addition to honouring the 1960 birth of Prince Andrew with a special ceremony and hosting social events such as the Yom Kippur dance, community activities also included a production of *Centennial Capers* in honour of Canada’s centennial year and memorial services, in 1969, for the fourteen accused Jewish spies hanged in Iraq, and in 1972 for the murdered Israeli Olympic athletes.

Shaarey Tzedec Sisterhood not only played a vital role in synagogue life, baking for *oneg shabbat* and *kiddush* and organizing holiday celebrations and programmes, but was also active in fundraising. In 1963, led by Mrs. Eddie Stochinsky, Sisterhood published the cookbook *Plain ‘n’ Fancy* which contained a section “For Men Only”.

Final years

From the outset, Shaarey Tzedec had mixed seating with a section at the front reserved for separate seating. While more than 250 Orthodox synagogues once offered mixed (family) seating, by the late 1950s there was a move by the Orthodox Union to actively encourage those synagogues to institute a *mechitza* (separate seating with a partition) and in time, synagogues with mixed seating were



Burning the Shaarey Tzedec mortgage, early 1970s? Left to right: Leon Gutman, Rabbi Abraham Postone, Leo Sheftel, Dr. Harry Bercov, Rabbi Lewis Ginsburg. JHSSA #1405. JHSSA seeks the exact date.

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no longer able to call themselves Orthodox. This became known as the *Mechitza* Controversy. Throughout North America, Orthodox synagogues with mixed seating wrestled with this issue, with outcomes ranging from denominational switches to mergers and even legal battles.

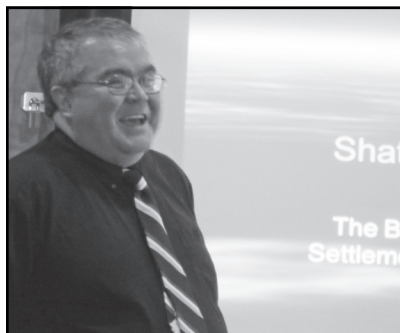
This controversy directly impacted Calgary in 1981, when Rabbi Schertz was hired with the understanding that his mandate was to convince the membership to implement a *mechitza*. A special meeting of the congregation was held in 1982 to discuss the *mechitza* issue. In 1983, the congregation voted 246 to 113 to retain family seating.

In November 1984, the executives of Shaarey Tzedec and Beth Israel Synagogues each appointed representatives to a joint committee to study the feasibility of merger, co-chaired by Murray Dubinsky (Beth Israel) and Morris Dancyger (Shaarey Tzedec). The spring 1985 report recommended a merger. In October 1985, members of each synagogue voted on the concept of merging. Beth Israel members apparently approved with a substantial majority, but at Shaarey Tzedec the vote failed to achieve the required 75% majority.

“Shattered Dreams” near Pine Lake

**JHSSA program featuring Michael Dawe,
January 20, 2013**

Submitted by Zena Drabinsky



Michael Dawe presenting the history of the Jewish colonists in the Blank's Lake settlement, January 20, 2013. Photographer: Jim Casquenette. JHSSA #2681

Twenty people came to hear a highly interesting talk about the Blank's Lake Jewish Settlement in central Alberta. Michael Dawe, Curator of History at Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery, presented an illustrated lecture titled “Shattered Dreams” on the history of that ill-fated colony of seventy Russian Jewish settlers whose lives on the new land were harsh. They had fled their

native land after experiencing anti-Semitic pogroms, and were led to this ‘promised land’ by Rabbi Abraham Blank in 1893. However, within a few years, they had all left the area, leaving few clues as to what the people in the colony and their lives were like. The Blank's Lake settlement, which was located north and west of Pine Lake, disappeared when the hardships of bad weather, failed crops, poverty and starvation drove them away from the area. Little remains at the site of the settlement except the foundations of a few houses.

Mr. Dawe has recently obtained new documentation to aid his research. He reported that the Red Deer community is very interested in documenting and preserving the historically significant site. He hopes to be able to return with further information in a few years’ time.

A new Board at the Shaarey Tzedec was elected in 1985 and eight months later, in June 1986, both synagogues held another vote on amalgamation. This time, 86% of the members of the Shaarey Tzedec voted to amalgamate. After three voting processes, Beth Israel also approved amalgamation by a 76% majority on September 29, 1986. The fall of 1986 marked the last Shaarey Tzedec conducted High Holy Day services. Guest cantor was David Haas from Israel. The ritual committee led the services and sermons were presented by volunteers.

On December 16, 1986, the amalgamated Sisterhood convened its first meeting. The new congregation was called Beth Tzedec, symbolically retaining parts of the names of both constituent congregations. Services were held at the former Shaarey Tzedec while the Beth Israel building was renovated. In 1991, the Centre for Positive Living purchased the Shaarey Tzedec building, which it has since sold to a developer.

Shaarey Tzedec was a vibrant synagogue over its 28 year existence. As Aron Eichler noted at the October 14th farewell event, there was a phenomenal participation of members in synagogue activities; for many, it was their life. The Shaarey Tzedec was an active presence in the Calgary community and beyond, and lives on in the memories of a large portion of the Calgary boomer generation.

Past Shaarey Tzedec members are encouraged to share their stories with the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta. Please contact the office and a volunteer from the JHSSA oral history committee will be delighted to meet with you. Even back in 1975, the *Calgary Jewish News Centennial Edition* article on Shaarey Tzedec written in tribute to the Calgary centenary, bemoaned the lack of archival data on the “early” days of Shaarey Tzedec. Please help us ensure that our history is preserved for generations to come.

Bibliographical sources for this article are available in the JHSSA office. JHSSA has copies of the 1960 dedication video.



Shaarey Tzedec High Holiday Choir, 1966. Back row, left to right: _ Harel, Saul Isenstein, Charlie Gelfand, Leon Snyder, Norman Lipton, Morry Rogers, Murray Robins. Middle Row: Cantor Elhanan Gelberg, Steven Lipton, Ben Hashman, Lionel Conn, Jack Crystal, Morley Shore, Rabbi Benjamin Eisenberg. Children, back row: Simon Isenstein, Steve Cohen, Leslie Viner, Harold Lipton, Barry Gurevitch. Front row: David Rootman, Stanley Rootman, Leslie Viner, Josh Greenberg, Len Sherwood. Photographer: John Klavins. Source: Lionel Conn. JHSSA #2006

Thank you to all our 2013 Members

Membership donations are used to support the projects and operations of the JHSSA, which is an independent, self-sustaining organization. We issue official tax receipts for all donations. Our membership year is from September to August. Special thanks to all those members who have made donations beyond their membership fee. These funds have extra impact, as they count towards our eligibility for the matching Alberta Community Spirit Grant. Please inform our office of any inadvertent omissions or corrections.

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JHSSA NEWS:

Jack Switzer Memorial Research Workshops, January 8 & 22; February 5, 2013

Doug Cass, Director of Library and Archives at the Glenbow, hosted two informative sessions for the JHSSA this January. The first included a behind the scenes tour of the Archives and an introduction to Jewish sources there. The second looked at materials such as school records, Canadian Pacific Land sale records, membership records of clubs and organizations, Henderson's Directories, Cummins Homestead Maps, and newspapers which are often used for genealogical research. For more information on the Glenbow Archives, visit their website at <http://www.glenbow.org/collections/archives/>. In February, archivist Agi Romer Segal presented the research tools available at the JHSSA. The workshops were well attended and positively received. Visit www.jhssa.org for the extended version of this article, including links to different resources discussed at the workshops.

Canadian Jewish Heritage Network (CJHN) expands to include St. John data

The Canadian Jewish Heritage Network website, www.cjhn.ca, is increasingly becoming a more valuable research tool. The website was launched in 2011 and it links the resources of the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives and Montreal's Jewish Public Library Archives. The hope is for the site to become a shared portal to multiple archival collections from other Canadian Jewish organizations. The recent addition of material from the St. John Jewish Historical Museum is an important step in that direction. The website includes a genealogy database section that is helpful for family history research.

JHSSA Seeks Material about Small Town Life

Please contact us if you have personal stories, documents or photographs about Jewish families or businesses in southern Alberta towns.



Medicine Hat Seder, c. 1951. Left to right: Ralph Levinson, Garry Kohn, Sophie Kohn, Joe Levinson, Ben Levinson, _?. Source: Sophie Kohn. JHSSA #424

Corrections to *Discovery*, Spring 2012

Author Sandra Lipton has sent us the following change to "Sometimes 'missing the boat' is a good thing: Celebrating the centenary of the arrival of Louis and Sarah Estrin to Calgary" *Discovery* v.22, no.2: Louis' parents Shlomo and Mariasha travelled to Canada with Ciwie (Tsivia) and Dov Ber (Harry). It was Berel (Benjamin), who left for Canada ahead of his parents and sister.

Southern Alberta Jewish War Veterans Database Project

In 2011, the JHSSA Annual General Meeting program featured a tribute to our surviving servicemen from World War II. The JHSSA board of directors subsequently decided to undertake a project to create an extensive searchable database of all the Jewish servicemen who had served in both world wars in any of the Allied armies and who have lived at least part of their lives in southern Alberta. JHSSA is pleased to announce that researcher Keith Hann has been hired to compile the database, using both JHSSA records and online resources.

Please contact our office at 403-444-3171 or jhssa@shaw.ca with details about a Jewish war veteran with a southern Alberta connection about whom we may not have information.

Smolensky Torah Scroll

At the JHSSA Annual General Meeting in October, Jerry Schwartz addressed the audience about the fate of his father-in law Rabbi Smolensky's Torah scroll. It was dedicated in Calgary in the 1940s and has since been used in synagogue services in Kelowna and in various locations in the United States. Please contact the JHSSA office with any helpful information about this Torah scroll.

Cliff Bungalow-Mission History Book

The Cliff Bungalow-Mission community is planning the publication of a book about families and businesses with past connections to the area. They welcome submissions of information, memories and photographs. Please contact Judith Theroux at 403-455-4285 or cbmca.historybook@gmail.com.

DISCOVERY

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The editors welcome submissions for publication relating to areas of Calgary and Southern Alberta Jewish history. All articles should be typed, documented and sent for consideration.

Statements of fact or opinion appearing in *Discovery* are made on the responsibility of the authors alone, and do not imply the endorsement of the editors or the JHSSA.

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