

# JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

VOLUME 14, No. 2

JUNE 2004

## 1911 – First Synagogue Cornerstone Ceremony Attracts Donors, Dignitaries

Tuesday, August 8, 1911 was a big day for Calgary's 600 Jews. On that day construction of the Jewish community's House of Jacob synagogue began. It was a day of dignified pageantry, with a cornerstone dedication and speeches by Jewish leaders and community dignitaries.

Invitations went out to the public, through the local newspapers, with the signatures of congregation leaders Jacob Diamond and Harry Cooper. A visiting rabbi, "the Reverend Marcus Berner, of Hirsch, Saskatchewan" was brought in for the occasion. (Hirsch was the center of a large Jewish farming colony near Estevan.)

Rabbi Berner provided some Judaic religious presence. The House of Jacob had no rabbi at the time, although a *schochet* (ritual kosher slaughterer) was employed. Geographically, Berner was likely the closest rabbi to Calgary. His was the only congregation between Winnipeg and Vancouver. The House of

Jacob, however, would be the first synagogue structure in that vast area.

The invitation stated that "Gentiles as well as Jews are cordially invited to be present with their ladies to take part in this important occasion."

"Corner Stone was Well Laid," was the Morning Albertan's headline in their report of the event. Part of the news item is worth repeating verbatim:

"That the Hebrews were as loyal to the flag of their adoption in Canada as Canadians themselves was the keynote of an eloquent address by Rabbi Marcus Berner, of Hirsch, Saskatchewan, at the corner stone-laying ceremony of the new Hebrew synagogue, the first Jewish headquarters in Western Canada, on Third Street East yesterday afternoon.

"Rabbi Berner is a striking figure, a farmer of a whole section of land in Saskatchewan, and a devout Hebrew teacher.

"... Abundant speeches were delivered, politicians ad infinitum.

"...The tenor of the addresses was the leveling of the barriers between Jews and Gentile."

The actual stone was put into place by congregant Charles Bell, who secured the honor as the highest bidder (at \$400) in a fund-raising auction held by the synagogue. (Bell owned a large hotel.) His brother, Alexander Bell and congregant J. Polsky also made substantial donations and had their names

inscribed on the cornerstone.

An important invited speaker was to be Reverend Dr. George Kerby, Calgary's most prominent churchman, principal of Mount Royal College and former minister of Central Methodist Church (now Central United), the city's largest.

Best known speaker, however, was Richard B. Bennett, who would become Prime Minister of Canada in 1930. In 1911 he was a provincial MLA, and a few weeks after the House of Jacob ceremony, on September 21st, he would be elected Member of Parliament for Calgary, defeating Liberal candidate G. Van Wart, Calgary's sheriff, who also spoke at the cornerstone ceremony.

Other speakers at the synagogue rite were Colonel James Walker, former Mountie, civic pioneer, and then a wealthy businessman; MLA Thomas Tweedie; city commissioners Arthur Graves and Simon Clarke; and acting police chief Thomas Mackie.

The House of Jacob held its first service in the new synagogue building on Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Friday, September 22nd, the day after the federal election day. Services were led

*Continued on Page 2*



The 1911 House of Jacob cornerstone, now part of the House of Jacob—Mikveh Israel Synagogue building. Photo: Jack Switzer.

### In this Issue:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Synagogue Cornerstone Ceremony .....   | 1 |
| 1891 – Six Jews in Calgary .....       | 2 |
| Jewish Airwoman Dies in 1943           |   |
| Alberta Air Crash .....                | 3 |
| 1927 Jewish Centre Campaign Makes      |   |
| Headlines in Calgary Papers.....       | 4 |
| Exhibit Sponsorship Opportunities..... | 5 |
| Calgary Jews Fete R.B. Bennett         |   |
| at 1939 Farewell.....                  | 6 |
| Jewish RAF Pilot Dies at Medicine      |   |
| Hat, 1941 .....                        | 6 |
| List of Oral Histories.....            | 7 |
| New Photo from our Archives.....       | 7 |
| 2004 AGM Program .....                 | 8 |
| JHSSA News.....                        | 8 |

Your membership and continuing support help us to publish Discovery. Thank you.

## 1891 – Six Jews in Calgary

Winnipeg had over six hundred Jews in 1891. Calgary had six.

These numbers are from a study done by genealogist Glen Eker, who reviewed original census returns and corrected erroneous Jewish population data originally published by the federal government.

Eker found six Jews in Calgary in 1891, and six in Lethbridge. Edmonton, not yet served by a railway, had only one Jewish resident. (The 1891 numbers for other western cities: Regina, 9; Saskatoon, none; Vancouver, 85; Victoria, 148; and Winnipeg, 645. About 135 Jews lived on "Saskatchewan" farms.)

There was little growth shown in the 1901 census. Calgary had just eight Jews in 1901; Lethbridge and Medicine Hat had none. Eighteen Jews lived in Edmonton in 1901, and one Jew lived in Blairmore. (Well over 200 Jews then lived in the Yukon, mainly in and around Dawson, the gold-rush capital.)

The table below notes Calgary's Jewish population and the overall civic numbers for each major census between 1891 and 2001.

| CALGARY JEWISH POPULATION DATA |                    |                            |                   |                            |                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Year                           | Calgary Population | % Change from Prev. Census | Jewish Population | % Change from Prev. Census | % of City Population |
| 1891                           | 3,876              |                            | 6                 | —                          | —                    |
| 1901                           | 4,398              | 12%                        | 8                 | —                          | —                    |
| 1911                           | 43,704             | 107%                       | 641               | —                          | 0.80%                |
| 1921                           | 63,305             | 45%                        | 1,263             | 97%                        | 2.00%                |
| 1931                           | 83,761             | 32%                        | 1,604             | 27%                        | 2.00%                |
| 1941                           | 88,904             | 6%                         | 1,760             | 10%                        | 1.90%                |
| 1951                           | 129,060            | 45%                        | 2,094             | 19%                        | 1.60%                |
| 1961                           | 249,641            | 93%                        | 2,866             | 37%                        | 1.10%                |
| 1971                           | 403,319            | 62%                        | 3,275             | 14%                        | 0.80%                |
| 1981                           | 580,585            | 44%                        | 6,065             | 85%                        | 1.00%                |
| 1991                           | 748,210            | 29%                        | 7,155             | 18%                        | 0.96%                |
| 2001                           | 943,310            | 26%                        | 7,945             | 10%                        | 0.80%                |

Substantial growth in the local Jewish population took place after 1905 as settlers took up available farm lands, and towns and cities grew to service the rapidly growing agricultural economy.

Sources: Glenbow Library – Glen Eker: *Jewish Residents of Western Canada in the 1870 - 1901 Censuses of Canada*; JHSSA director David Bickman brought the Eker study to our attention.

## Synagogue Cornerstone Ceremony

*Continued from Page 1*



Front of the House of Jacob Synagogue, 1967. The Hebrew date at the pinnacle, 5671, is the equivalent of 1911 in the civil calendar. The 'cornerstone' is visible near the doorway on the far right. Photo: Glenbow Archives, NA-5460-2.

by Henry Sosinsky, a local grocer, who acted as the congregation's cantor between visits from short-term rabbis.

Congregation pioneer Jacob Diamond had organized the first *minyan* (quorum of ten Jewish men) in 1894, assembling a group of residents, area farmers, and a traveling salesman for prayers in his home. As the Calgary Jewish community grew, more regular services were held, with lay leaders.

After 1905, with Calgary booming and scores of Jewish immigrants arriving every week, a more organized religious system was needed. Calgary and Edmonton shared the services of Rabbi

Hyman Goldstick in 1906-1907. As noted above, rabbinical presence was haphazard, but many congregants were well versed in orthodox ritual and were very able to conduct services.

In 1909 the House of Jacob congregation was incorporated, with Diamond as president. A lot was purchased late that year, for \$2,300 in the heart of the Jewish residential area, at 325 Fifth Avenue East. The congregation immediately erected a one-room building at the back of the property. It was put to use as a *cheder* (Hebrew school) and worship space while funds were raised for a permanent sanctuary.

The cornerstone was laid, as noted, in early August of 1911, and the House of Jacob was completed just six weeks later. The 400-seat synagogue was in use for over half a century, until 1968.

The original cornerstone was re-dedicated in 1983, when it was put into place in the foundation of the new House of Jacob Mikveh Israel Synagogue.

Sources: JHSSA Archives.

See page 6 for more about R.B. Bennett and the Jewish community.

# Jewish Airwoman Dies in 1943 Alberta Air Crash

Rose Goodman died near Calgary on February 26, 1943.

The 23-year old Jewish woman died in the crash of an RCAF training aircraft near Claresholm, where she was stationed as a Section Officer in the Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force. She was one 17,000 women to serve in the RCAF in World War II, and was the first to die in active service.

Rose Jette Goodman was born in 1919 and was raised in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, where her parents, Sol and Jeanette Goodman were prominent in the small Jewish community. The family was well off; Sol ran the Goodman Department Store (originally Vineberg, Goodman & Co.) in the city of 10,000. She had three sisters—Edith (b.1913), Ruth (1915), and Anetta (1924.)

Rose was active in the city's girl guide movement and played violin in the local symphony orchestra. Her many friends knew her as "Sweepy" Goodman. She attended Dalhousie University in Halifax, was active in extra-curricular activities, and graduated with a B.A. in 1941, the year she joined the RCAF.

Early in World War II some Canadian women were working as volunteers with armed forces units, and many joined the labor force to free up men for wartime service, but none were allowed to enlist until 1941, when all three branches of the Canadian forces opened their ranks to females.

The role of the RCAF Women's Division was summed up by its motto: "They Serve that Men may Fly." Thirty airwomen were killed in active service; some, like Rose Goodman, in aircraft accidents, and others during air raids in Britain.

Rose Goodman joined the Air Force in October, 1941, and was among the first 150 women to graduate from an administrative training course in Toronto. She served as a Sergeant Instructor (of physical training) at a WD base in Moncton, New Brunswick. She was promoted early in 1942 to the rank of Adjutant (the equivalent to lieutenant) and was posted to RCAF Service Flying Training School #15 at Claresholm, Alberta, about 60 miles south of Calgary. She later went up a rank, to Section Officer.

The life of a Women's Division officer could be lonely and stressful. A service history relates an incident concerning one officer, unnamed, but very likely



*Rose Goodman, RCAF (WD), c. 1942. Source: Sid Horovitz, Calgary (Goodman family member).*

Rose Goodman. An airwoman recalls:

"Despite higher pay, better uniforms and a number of other perks, I think women officers on flying stations had a pretty thin time of it. For one thing there were so few of them, and life could be lonely, since they weren't supposed to fraternize with the other ranks. On an SFTS there might be two women officers in charge of the WD, plus one dietician and a couple of nursing sisters. That didn't give them much leeway to choose friends. They were stuck with each other.

"I remember an officer on our station asking a small group of us airwomen who shared a love for opera and symphonic music to come to her quarters one evening and play records. She served us coffee and cookies and we had a lovely time—particularly since it was somewhat illicit. But I'm convinced that what was done under excuse of 'music appreciation' was more a case of her need for the company of kindred souls."

On the evening of January 26, 1943, Rose Goodman was a passenger in an Avro-Anson Crane, a twin-engine aircraft used to train bomber pilots. The pilot was Flight Lieutenant Stephen Strauss, 28, of Winnipeg. They were on a short flight from Lethbridge to Claresholm, when severe wing icing forced the aircraft to make a crash landing.

Strauss, although injured, was able to walk away from the downed airplane, but Goodman was dead.

The Calgary Chevra Kadisha (Jewish burial society) took charge of the remains. A contingent of local Jewish leaders was on hand when Chevra Kadisha members placed the casket on a Montreal-bound baggage car.

Rose Goodman was buried with full military honors and full Jewish ritual on February 2, 1943 at the Cemetery of the Spanish and Portugese Congregation in Montreal. Her casket was carried on a flower-bedecked gun carriage, accompanied by RCAF colleagues of both sexes. Her parents, sisters, and many friends from New Glasgow and Halifax were present.

The New Glasgow News eulogized Rose at length. In part the editor stated: "With her university training, Miss Goodman—it is hard to think of her in military terms—could have chosen a less risky, but still useful vocation; or she could have chosen the so-called 'social' world and done not much of anything other than seeking her own pleasure. She could have disdained serving in the ranks.

"She made her choice; she has given her life for her country.

"She served—and died—that men may fly.

"That we may win this war."

Sol Goodman bought the land near New Glasgow on which Rose and her friends used to camp and donated it to the Girl Guide movement, which developed the site as the Rose Goodman Girl Guide Camp. In Toronto, the Rose Goodman chapter of B'nai Brith Girls was formed in her honor.

### Yes, I would like to join the Jewish Historical Society

- Benefactor .....\$100
- Patron..... \$50
- Family..... \$25
- Single ..... \$18
- Institution/Corporation..... \$30
- Other

Please include your name, address, postal code and home and business phone numbers, along with a cheque payable to:

Jewish Historical Society of  
Southern Alberta  
1607 - 90 Avenue SW  
Calgary, Alberta T2V 4V7

*Do not send cash through the mail*

# 1927 Jewish Centre Campaign Makes Headlines in Calgary Papers

by Jack Switzer

On January 10, 1927, Calgary's Jews launched the fund-raising campaign for their new community centre with full-page articles in both of the city's daily newspapers.

The *Calgary Daily Herald*: "Jewish Citizens Unite in Community Hall Effort." *The Albertan* headlines read: "Calgary to Have New Community Centre—Drive to Raise \$50,000 Commences Monday" and "Community Centre to be Attractive City Asset."

Advertising by supportive Jewish businesses flanked the articles, and undoubtedly helped motivate the newspapers to print the publicity.

The articles were intended for two audiences. Jews were reminded about the need for a community centre and the plans to provide one; non-Jews were made aware of the Jewish community's growing confidence and its contributions to the city's welfare.

The building drive had actually been underway for nearly a year, but had been delayed by organizational problems and community conflicts. (See *Calgary Jews Raise Funds for Community Centre, 1926 - 28*, in the Autumn, 1994 issue of *Discovery*; it was written before the newspaper articles came to light.)

The Jewish community was assured that the new Centre would have no effect on the city's only synagogue, the House of Jacob. This was to dispel rumors that the Centre would accommodate a new congregation. It would principally house, according to the articles, new facilities for the Hebrew School, located since 1920 in a converted home.

The Centre would also have "an extensive Hebrew library," the largest west of Winnipeg, as well as an assembly hall, a gymnasium, and meeting rooms. It would be the headquarters for all of Calgary's Jewish organizations.

Non-Jews were given a glimpse of the Jewish community's self-confidence and philanthropic power. The \$50,000 building fund could be raised, the promoters assured the public, with no decrease in the Jewish group's current welfare obligations. Up to \$5,000 a year was being raised for

Zionist causes; \$1,000 annually was sent to the Winnipeg Jewish Orphanage, and \$600 to the Jewish old folks home there.

No Calgary Jew had ever applied for public assistance, it was stated, as the community looks after its own. A free-loan society and a welfare fund aided Jews in need.

"Nor have the activities of the Jewish people of Calgary stopped at the border of their own circle of persuasion. It has extended to the realms of nearly every charitable or welfare activity in the city. They have contributed very largely to the YMCA, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Board of Public Welfare and to the Sunshine Fund..."

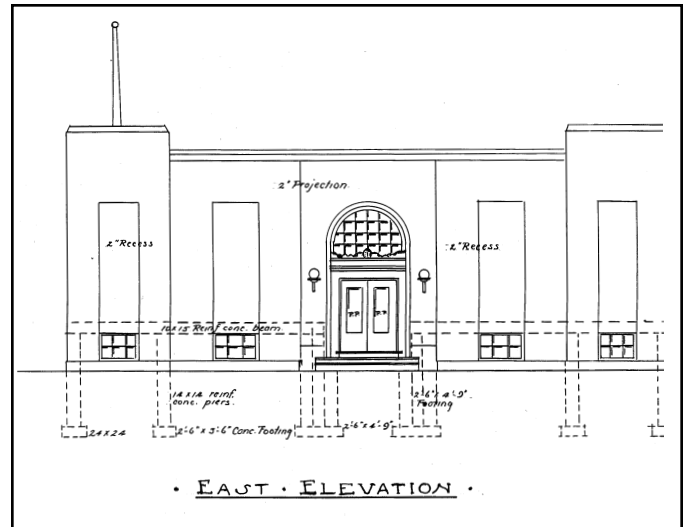
One of the articles provides some previously-unknown historical information. We know that Calgary's first Jewish religious services were conducted in private homes. New to us are the locations rented for more organized observances—a hall in the Bank of Commerce building (still standing at 12th Avenue and First Street S.W.) and the Eagles lodge (very near the Bank facility.)

It is stated that an early House of Jacob cleric was a Rabbi Caplan; this is a new item.

The article also gives some useful details about the Hebrew School. The site then in use (on 6th Avenue East) was purchased for \$10,000 and underwent \$3,500 in renovations to create three classrooms and a lecture hall. Enrollment was about 100; students, aged between seven and fifteen, attended after public school hours, from 4:30 to 8:30 pm. The school had two instructors, "graduates of a new seminary system of teaching." The school's annual budget was between \$6,000 and \$7,000.

No community centre site had yet been selected, nor were there floor plans. But the organizers envisioned a multi-story structure, and expected the building funds would soon be raised.

The newspaper articles re-launching the



Architect Ernest Brown's 1929 drawing of the east side of the House of Israel community centre building. Former Talmud Torah (Hebrew School) students will recognize this as the front of their school. Source: Glenbow Alberta Archives, Ernest Brown fonds.

building-fund drive were followed by a mass meeting on January 12th at the House of Jacob. Morris Groberman continued as chairman, and Henry Goldberg took a more active role. Despite their optimism, the campaign was long and arduous.

Continuing communal divisions plagued their efforts, as did competing claims on the community's financial resources. Secular Yiddishists formed the Peretz Institute in 1927, began their own afternoon school, and in 1929 were able to open the Peretz School building, with a Jewish day school and social-cultural facilities and programs that competed with those promised by the community centre promoters.

Construction of the Jewish community centre—the House of Israel building—would not begin until 1929; its first user, the Hebrew School, moved into the ground floor in 1931.

A new synagogue, the Beth Israel congregation, began to use the still-incomplete building in 1935. The depression and World War II delayed the completion until 1949. At least \$200,000 was spent on construction during the 20-year ordeal. (See *The House of Israel, Calgary's First Jewish Centre*, in the Spring 1993 issue of *Discovery*.)

Despite the later setbacks of actual fund-raising and construction, the bravado of the 1927 newspaper publicity blitz is instructive. Jews were in the headlines, in a positive light and were seen to be active in building community—in their own small world, and in that of their adopted homeland.

Sources: JHSSA Archives

CALGARY ALBERTAN—The Newspaper of the Home—FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 1927

# CALGARY TO HAVE NEW COMMUNITY CENTER DRIVE TO RAISE \$50,000 COMMENCES MONDAY

Genuine Reductions and Savings at Wener's Sale

**THE ENTIRE STOCK OF SUITS and O'COATS**

Offering at

## Sensational Savings



Men and young men cannot afford to pass by this money saving event. The finest pure wool imported English materials, combined with best hand tailoring. We handle the finest makes in the Dominion, including Randall & Johnston of Toronto.

Overcoats include the Famous French Montagnacs

3 only. Reg. \$90.00 ..... **\$59.75**

SUITS include Scotch Tweeds, English Worsted, Serge and Novelty Weaves, at prices without comparison.

**WENER'S CORRECT CLOTHES, LTD.**

130 EIGHTH AVENUE WEST Between Arcade and St and 10c Store

Mass Meeting in House of Jacob Will Hear Lecture on Subject From One of Canada's Leading Rabbis; Local Jews Are Enthusiastic Over Proposal

The campaign for the building of a new community center for the Hebrew residents of Calgary will open officially Monday evening, when Rabbi S. Frank, of Winnipeg, will address a mass meeting in the House of Jacob.

Rabbi Frank, who strongly favors the idea of such a center for Jewish activities in Calgary, will tell of the advantages of similar community buildings in other Canadian cities and urge a strong united effort to collect the amount required so that an edifice worthy of its purpose may be erected within the year.

**Community Backs Plan**

At a mass meeting held in December it was decided to embark on the project of raising funds to build this combined school, auditorium and official headquarters for all Jewish organizations, which has long been felt as a need in Calgary. The first step toward realization of the plan will be made following Rabbi Frank's address, when pledges will be asked for from individuals and organizations. Work toward the raising of the amounts promised will be commenced immediately, in the hope that a site may be purchased, plans drawn up, and work on the new building actually commenced before the close of the present year.

Much enthusiasm was displayed at the initial meeting last month when the plan was proposed, and a large gathering ready to pledge generously is confidently expected Monday night. A final meeting of the committee of 44 members appointed at the first meeting was held Thursday evening, under the chairmanship of M. Groberman, to arrange various details of the campaign to be launched.

**Russia Wants More Prairie Bronchos**

HEPHERA, Jan. 6.—Dissatisfied with the first shipment of 1000 prairie bronchos, the government of Soviet Russia placed an order for another 1000 and 2000 more. The purchase between Jan. 6 and 2000 was made in December, 1926, stated Jack Hynes, representative of the 1000 prairie bronchos. He said that with J. C. Hargrave of the Dominion branch of animal branch, delivered the shipment at Lethbridge.

General Hargrave, Hynes & here of Russia, stated that the first and second shipments were received with the greatest satisfaction with the majority of the animals. Leaving the prairie was in September the horses were loaded in Lethbridge and in October. Five hundred of them came from Saskatchewan and the remainder from Alberta and British Columbia.

"We received courtesy and consideration during our stay in Russia," Mr. Hynes said. "Our horses and other animals were of course limited, but our services were of course limited, but we were very well received. From what we saw of the

## CHESTERFIELD SPECIALS

A very nice three-piece Suits, covered in a fine mohair and jessour, reversible suitcases. This is an exceptional buy. We only have one and must clear out on Saturday. Regular price \$228.00, for ..... **\$175**

A very beautiful three-piece Mohair Chesterfield Suits, covered in a very high grade mohair, with reversible suitcases, mass edge, shirred trousers. This is an exceptionally good suit at an unusually low price. Don't miss up this opportunity. Delivered to your home with just \$25.00 down, balance 10% monthly, or less if you wish. We charge you no interest on the unpaid balance. Price ..... **\$247**

Another three-piece Suits, with fine quality; also has reversible suitcases; has very large chairs. This is a very fine suit. We have four different covers for you to choose from. Regular \$268.00. To go for the balance of our suits at ..... **\$255**

One odd Chesterfield, covered backs and seats, with a very fine camel mohair, reversible suitcases. This being an odd piece, we will sacrifice for ..... **\$97.50**

Another odd Chesterfield, covered with finest mohair and reversible suitcases, in a very fine silk French Tapestry. This belonged to a \$400.00 suit. To go at ..... **\$125**

## DOMINION

Furniture Store, Ltd.

M. GROBERMAN, MGR. 134 EIGHTH AVE. E.

This headline is just one of many featuring the 1927 campaign for a Jewish Community Centre to appear in Calgary newspapers. These articles were surrounded by ads from Jewish businesses. Also featured on this page from the Calgary Albertan were ads for Hub Clothing, Reliable Clothing, Kosher Meat Market, Standard Kosher Meat Shop, Alberta News and National News.



## Assure Yourself a Place in History

# A Joyful Harvest

### Exhibit Sponsorship Opportunities

We are glad to report continued progress on our 2005 centennial exhibit, A Joyful Harvest. We have a team of writers and editors preparing the text for our 100

feature panels and our timelines. Examples of these panels were featured in our February 2004 issue of *Discovery*.

**Sponsorship categories for A Joyful Harvest 2005 exhibit**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Friend of the Exhibit  | \$100   |
| Person, Place or Organization (100 feature sponsors available) | \$250   |
| Historic Milestone Sponsor                                     | \$500   |
| Decade Sponsor   | \$1,000 |
| Other  |         |

Please contact our office at 253-8600 ext. 209 for further details.  
 Please make cheques payable to: Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta  
 Send payment to: JHSSA, 1607 - 90th Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T2V 4V7

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

We are also pleased to report that we have already solicited substantial financial support from individuals and Foundations that wish to become sponsors of the exhibit. We have also applied to government agencies for funding.

The Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta wants to give the general community the opportunity to become part of this historic and exciting project. Below are some of the sponsorship categories available. All donations will be acknowledged in the exhibit and in any accompanying publication. Donations can be made in your own name or in honor of someone else. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations.

**Send in your sponsorship donation today and assure yourself a place in the annals of history!**

# Calgary Jews Fete R.B. Bennett at 1939 Farewell

By Jack Switzer

Former Prime Minister Richard Bedford Bennett, a political outcast embittered by his failure to pull the nation out of the Great Depression, left Calgary to live in England early in 1939. To most Calgary Jews, however, he was an old friend, and they gave him a warm send-off when he left the city.

Representatives of seventeen Calgary Jewish groups held a farewell reception at the Palliser Hotel (Bennett's residence), and presented him with their gift—an eight-volume English-language Talmud (a compendium of Jewish law).

They did not actually present the heavy volumes. They told Bennett that since the books were published in England, it would make most sense to have them delivered to his new home there.

Dr. Joseph Hertz, chief rabbi of the British Empire, was asked to present the books to Bennett. Hertz offered to take them to Bennett's country estate, but the former prime-minister suggested that since he was now retired he could instead visit the rabbi in London.

Rabbi Hertz reported on their meeting in a letter to Calgary gift organizers Louis Fradkin and Ben Ginsberg. "Mr. Bennett was very much touched by your thoughtfulness and the token of friendship the Calgary community have extended to him. I found him a charming man, and we spent an hour together discussing the Jewish and general world situation."

Bennett came to Calgary after his graduation from Dalhousie University in 1893 and became the law partner of Senator James A. Lougheed. His many friends and clients included members of the city's growing Jewish community. He spoke at the cornerstone-laying ceremony for the House of Jacob synagogue in 1911, and at other Jewish events.

Ben Ginsberg, Calgary's first Jewish lawyer, recalls getting an unexpected start-up loan in 1913 after Bennett spoke to a friend at Ginsberg's bank. Ginsberg remained a friend, colleague, and political supporter.

Bennett was a Conservative member of the Alberta legislature from 1909 to 1911, when he won his first seat in parliament. He became leader of the Conservative party in 1927, and served as Prime Minister from 1930 to 1935. His attempts to stop the Great Depression were largely unsuccessful, and he was unable (and some say unwilling) to ease severe restrictions on Jewish immigration to Canada.

Disappointed after his party's defeat by McKenzie King's Liberals in 1935, Bennett gradually withdrew from politics. He resigned as Leader of the Opposition in 1938 and returned to Calgary. The 1939 farewell party and the gift from his Calgary Jewish friends was one of the highlights of an otherwise difficult period.

Max Aitkin—Lord Beaverbrook—an old friend and business associate, helped Bennett secure a peerage. He became Viscount Bennett in 1941. He died in 1947, and is the only Canadian prime minister not buried in Canada.

Sources: Glenbow Archives, JHSSA Archives.



Prime Minister R.B. Bennett (in dark coat) shakes hand of friend Ben Ginsberg at the C.P.R. station, Calgary, early 1930s. Photo: Glenbow Alberta Archives, NB 16-180.

## Jewish RAF Pilot Dies at Medicine Hat, 1941

Rose Goodman was not the only Jew to die in a wartime training accident in southern Alberta.

Barrington V. Castle, a Royal Air Force pilot, is buried in Medicine Hat. He died in the crash of an Oxford As-10 training plane on September 17, 1941. The accident took place at #34 RAF Service Flying Training School, now the Medicine Hat airport.

Castle was alone in the twin-engine trainer, in which he had recently qualified as a pilot, and was attempting a barrel roll shortly after take-off. The aircraft stalled, and he crashed right in front of the hangars. He was rushed to the base hospital, but died very soon.

The pilot was 31, and was survived by his wife, Betty, and a son, David. They lived in Cricklewood, Middlesex, England.

His instructor recalled Castle's funeral. "I was also surprised at his funeral to see a Star of David on the coffin. The service was conducted by the Rev. Squadron Leader A.R. Bradshaw, and attended by the Commanding Officer. Since Castle was of the Jewish faith we must assume that the burial service was amended accordingly by the Church of England Padre."

Accidents were relatively common at



Headstone of Royal Air Force pilot B.V. Castle, in the Medicine Hat military cemetery. Source: JHSSA Archives.

Canadian air training bases. In its nearly five years of operation, between 1941 and 1944, over 2,000 airmen were trained at SFTS #34. There were 48 flying fatalities at the Medicine Hat facility. Castle's death was one of the first.

# Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta Oral History Collection

The following is a list of the people for whom we have an oral history in our collection. Most of these interviews have been conducted by JHSSA volunteers. Others are copies from the Provincial Archives or the Glenbow. This project was first co-ordinated by Trudy Cowan, and JHSSA Vice President Bertha Gold has been overseeing this project for many years with the help of Therese Nagler. There are now transcripts available for almost all of these interviews.

If you are interested in having a volunteer conduct an interview with you to record your family history, please contact our office at 253-8600 ext. 209.

|   |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Aizenman, Berl & Rochel – as told by Cynthia Aizenman<br>Alberta Film Exchange – as told by G. Sharpe<br>Allman, Ethel  | Gurevitch, Alan (Curly)<br>Hackman, Lena & Revela<br>Hallis, Rose<br>Hanson, Zelda (Austin)<br>Hardin, Dr. Samuel Hector, Pat (Bercuson)<br>Helman, Sabine (Nagler)<br>Heltay, Edward<br>Himelfarb, Vera<br>Hoffman, Dorothy<br>Horodezky, Fred/Fannie<br>Horodezky, Lily<br>Horodezky, Nate  | Pearlman, Edythe (Rosen)<br>Podersky, Anne<br>Polish Jewish Family Loan Assoc.<br>Postone, Rabbi Abraham & Evelyn<br>Presma, Azriel<br>Promislow, Sally<br><br>Rabinovitch, Shirley<br>Raskin, Elly<br>Riback, M. Ted<br>Rimer, Val<br>Robins, Pam (Hallis)<br>Robins, Murray<br>Roginsky, Ben<br>Rubin, Al<br>Samuels, Marie (Hanson)<br>Sanofsky, Nate<br>Sattin, Robert<br>Schwartz, Fay (Smolensky)<br>Segall, Bertha (Hart)<br>Sengaus, Ben/Tom<br>Shapiro, Archie/Charna (Manolson)<br>Sheftel, Leo<br>Singer, Bella | Sklar, Tanya (Gelfand)<br>Smigelski, Mike re Sibbald<br>Smithens, Robert as told by Sheldon Smithens<br>Smolkin, Bob<br>Sterling, Ben/Moe<br>Swartz, Rose<br>Switzer, Charles<br>Switzer, Jack<br>Switzer, Sam<br><br>Tucker, Joe<br><br>Ullman, Annie/Louis<br>Ullman, Julian<br>Ullman, Leo<br>Ullman, Louis/Sam<br>Ullman, Sarah (Bercovitz)<br>Ullman, Simpson (Sy)<br><br>Veiner, Harry<br>Vogel, Max<br><br>Weiner, Lil<br>Wolochow, David<br>Woolfe, Harry<br>Wyne, Annie (Rosenthal) | <b>WAR ORPHANS</b><br>Blitz, Steve<br>Glin, Saul<br>Kirshner, Oscar<br>Leiser, Issac<br>Lowy, Leo<br>Sander, Mickey<br>Schwartz, Bill<br>Yaras, Esther<br>Zuckier, Elliot<br><br><b>VIDEO INTERVIEWS</b><br><i>(Memories of our Pioneers)</i><br>Bercovich, Max<br>Cohen, Martha (Block)<br>Gold, Bertha (Horodezky)<br>Goldin, Dorothy (Diamond)<br>Horwitz, Ida (Baltzan)<br>Pearlman, Edythe (Rosen)<br>Polsky, Mel<br>Sanders, Morris<br>Sengaus, Willie<br>Sheftel, Leo<br>Waterman, David<br>Zuidema, Lilian |
| Belzberg, Hinda<br>Belzberg, Hy<br>Belzberg, Jenny<br>Bercovich, Blanche<br>Bercovich, Max<br>Bleviss, Julius (Ziggy)<br>Bogoch, Manuel<br>Brager, Joe<br><br>Carnat, Ruth<br>Chetner, Abe<br>Chetner, Nate<br>Chetner, Rose<br>Coad, Jim/Fano, A. (re Sibbald)<br>Cohen, Becky (Levitt)<br>Cohen, Bernie<br>Cohen, Emanuel<br>Cohen, Martha (Block)<br>Comisarow, Bill & Sophie<br><br>Davids, Hymie<br>Diamond, Bessie (Marks)<br>Dlin, Saul<br>Duke, Eva<br>Dvorkin, Miriam<br><br>Edelson, Jack<br>Eichler, Aron<br>Eisenberg, Jack<br>Engle, Sarah<br>Estrin, Abraham<br>Faber, Jacob<br>Faidler, Lil (Belzberg)<br>Finkleman, Emily<br><br>Gelfand, Barney<br>Goldberg, Marcia – as told by Muriel Ginsberg<br>Gorasht, Alex<br>Gorasht, Eva Sarah<br>Gorasht, Minnie | Isenstein, Harry<br><br>Jacobson, Julia<br>Jewish War Veterans<br>Joffe, Hattie (Diamond)<br>Joffe, Jay<br><br>Kahanoff, Minnie<br>Kerr, Allan<br>Kettner, Frank<br>Kleisner, Annette (Horwitz)<br>Kline, Cecil<br>Kline, Constance<br><br>Lander, Dr. David as told by M. Dolgoy<br>Lavin, Abraham<br>Lewis, Bea<br>Lewis, Leo<br>Libin, Jean<br><br>Miller, Doris (Mittleman)<br>Moscovich, Joe<br><br>Nagler, Melvin<br><br>Oretsky, Aaron (Orek)<br>Oretsky, Reuben (Harris)<br><br>Paperny, Anne (Shumiatcher) |  |  |  |

## New Photo from our Archives



*Goresht family gathering, c. 1948, Calgary. Around table, l to r (back): Clara and Harry Chumir, Alex and Eva Gorasht, Robbie Waisman, Ida Goresht, Sam Goresht, hosts Rachel and Harry Goresht; (front) l to r: Sheldon Chumir, Mervin (Sonny) Gorasht, Sam and Minnie Gorasht, Blanche Gorasht. Robbie Waisman, a young Holocaust survivor, lived with Rachel and Harry's family for several years. Photo courtesy of Sam Goresht.*



## Artifacts, Heirlooms and Anecdotes 2004 AGM Program

Our 2004 AGM program on September 27th will be our own community "Antiques Roadshow". We are calling on members of the Jewish community to submit a description of a family "treasure" or a beloved family anecdote to be featured at the annual general meeting.

Artifacts should have a direct connection to your family history and preferably also have a connection to Jewish or local, Alberta history. Please include a photograph of the item, if possible, and short description of its importance to your family. Please do not send in the artifact itself. Sheldon Smithens, well known auctioneer, antiques dealer and JHSSA Board member has agreed to comment on the items selected.

Family anecdotes should be brief enough to be presented in 2-3 minutes. Photographs of the people involved would be most helpful.

All entries must be in our office in the Calgary JCC by Friday, August 13, 2004 so that our programming committee can make a final selection of the items to be featured at our AGM on Sept. 27. All entries will be filed in our archives and we will make every effort to feature all submissions in future issues of *Discovery*.



Family treasures like these 100-year old Sabbath candlesticks, belonging to sisters Ann Goresht and Sylvia Mandel, will be described and evaluated by antiques expert Sheldon Smithens at our 2004 Annual General Meeting. Photo: Deryk Bodington.

## JHSSA News

### JHSSA Gets New Archival and Work Space

With the support of the Beth Tzedec Synagogue, the JHSSA has acquired rental space in the lower level of the synagogue in which to store archival items and assemble display materials.

The new space will allow the Historical Society to move archival materials from current inadequate facilities. It will also provide room for staff and volunteers to prepare the more than 100 panels of text and photographs which will comprise the Society's major 2005 Alberta centennial project, *A Joyful Harvest*.

### Tribute Cards

We have a new supply of a variety of JHSSA tribute cards appropriate for any occasion. JHSSA Director Carey Smith has volunteered to take orders, to send out the tribute cards and to take of the billing.

Individual cards are a minimum of \$5.00. There is also a "Chai" card. For a \$36 donation or more, the honoree's name will be inscribed in a book in our library. To order a card, call Carey at 253-5152.

### Calling all 80 year olds

At our AGM on Sept. 27, 2004 we will again be honoring those members of our community who have turned 80 in the past year. If you know of someone who should be on our list, please submit the name by the end of August to our office at 253-8600 ext. 209 or to Harriet Libin at 252-0355

### New Members

The following people have become members since our last issue or their names were inadvertently omitted on our previous listing.

#### Benefactors:

Martin & Gertrude Cohos  
Hy & Mickey Davids, Lethbridge

#### Patrons:

Jack & Doreen Abugov  
Muriel Ginsberg, Victoria, B.C.  
Beryl Libin, Palm Springs, CA

#### Members:

Allen County Public Library  
William Aizenman  
Gary Dvorkin, Mississauga, ON  
Tish Dvorkin, Mesa, AZ  
Barry & Ila Hardin  
Dan Kauffman, Edmonton  
Bessie Libin  
Jean Libin  
Rose Libin  
Betty Mayer  
Jerry & Fay Schwartz  
Pauline Weinstein, Richmond, B.C.

### Do you have Historical Material? Don't hide it in the basement – give it to us.

The Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta is always interested in adding material concerning local Jewish families and organizations to its archives. Call us at 253-8600, ext. 209 to donate material.

## DISCOVERY

### Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta

President: Jay Joffe  
Vice Presidents: David Bickman  
Emanuel Cohen  
Bertha Gold  
Harriet Libin  
Treasurer: Henry Gutman  
Secretary: Zena Drabinsky

Directors: Joe Brager, Hymie Davids, Les Diamond, Jack Edelson, Brenda Eisenberg, Florence Elman, Harold Elman, Sheila Gurevitch, Ida Horwitz, Barb Joffe, Sid Macklin, Mel Nagler, Therese Nagler, Judy Parker, Mel Polsky, Tiby Presma, Harry Sanders, Carey Smith, Sheldon Smithens, Jack Switzer, David Waterman

Editors: Jack Switzer, Jay Joffe,  
Agi Romer Segal

© 2004 by the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta (a non-profit, registered society).  
Donations gratefully accepted.

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 J.H.S.S.A.

Please address all communications on editorial and circulation matters to:

Discovery  
c/o The Jewish Historical Society  
of Southern Alberta  
1607 - 90th Avenue S.W.  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2V 4V7

Phone 253-8600, ext. 209  
Email: jhssa@shaw.ca