

# JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

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## A Joyful Harvest: Special Sneak Preview



by Maxine Fischbein for Discovery

Do you know about the Silesian Rabbi's son who established Alberta's largest coal mine?

How about the doctor who became a leading expert in the treatment of alcoholism?

Or the Calgary-born broadcasting pioneer who headed CTV's operations as host broadcaster of the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary?

These are just some of the amazing people you will meet this August when the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta presents *A Joyful Harvest*, an

exhibit that celebrates Alberta's Centennial telling the proud story of more than 100 years of Jewish contribution to Southern Alberta life.

In addition to providing illustrated timeline panels that document the development of the Jewish community, *A Joyful Harvest* will devote 100 feature panels to some of the people, places and organizations that have made a difference within and well beyond it.

Some of the people have made their mark here in Southern Alberta while others have moved on, enriching lives in other cities and countries.

Even those who think they have a fair grasp of who's who in the Jewish community are in for a few surprises once the exhibit opens.

You'll hear more about the German Jewish engineer and entrepreneur who arrived in Canada in 1906 and, shortly thereafter, staked major coal claims in Alberta. He established the Brazeau Colliery and a model mining town 100 kilometers west of Rocky Mountain House. The town still bears his name.

Another major Alberta mine was established by an American Jewish businessman who, in the late 19th Century, served as the mayor of Butte, Montana. His name is forever linked with the mining town he built in the Crowsnest Pass in 1901 and the disaster that befell it less than two years later.

Nearby, in Claresholm, an addiction treatment centre was named in honour of the Russian-born Jewish doctor who settled in Alberta in the 1930s and, for three decades, served the citizens of Black Diamond and Turner Valley.

A well-respected general practitioner, he championed the medical philos-

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Sheldon Smithens (left) MCs our own *Antique Road Show – Memories & Mementos*. With Smithens are Charna Shapiro and her daughter, Judy Shapiro (see story on Page 2).

## Memories and Mementos Prove Popular

The "Memories and Mementos" program at our 2004 Annual Meeting was among the most popular JHSSA events ever.

Seven Calgarians shared their memorabilia with our "host," Sheldon Smithens, and told the stories of why these family treasures are so special.

Their presentations made the items special to the audience as well, and we once again thank our participants for sharing their memories and stories with us.

Four of the "Memories and Mementos" stories are presented in this issue of *Discovery*. The remainder will be published in future issues.

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

# Charna Shapiro: Morris Manolson's Branding Iron

Charna Shapiro was the first baby born on the Montefiore Jewish farm colony near Sibbald. Her father, Morris F. Manolson came from Romania and, after a short time in Montreal, moved to the Montefiore colony in 1912.

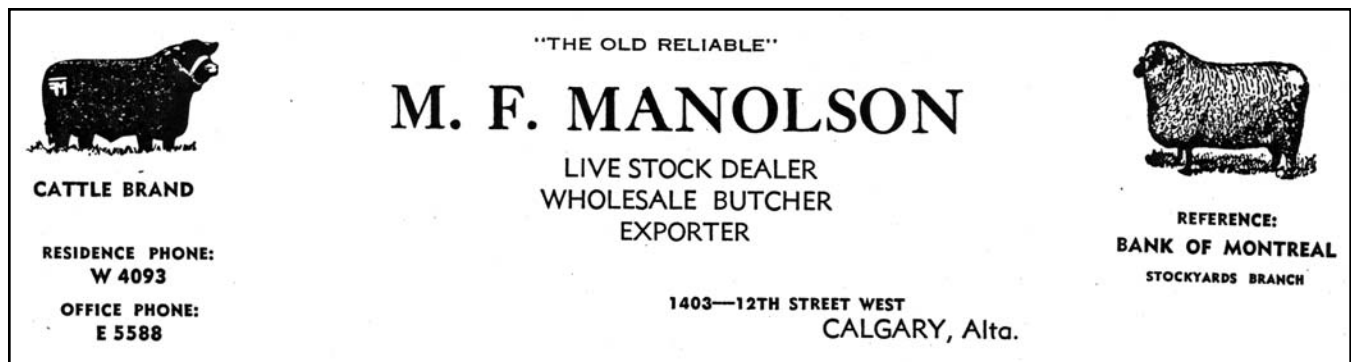
In 1913, Morris Manolson married Fanny Kline, whose father Abush Kline had come to Alberta in 1905. In 1920 Morris and Fanny moved to Calgary, where Morris joined his father-in-law as

a cattle dealer. He later became a major cattleman on his own. During World War II he was a supply officer, buying cattle for military needs.

His firm exported cattle to the Chicago market. Manolson's business cards carry the motto "The Old Reliable". It refers to him as a "livestock dealer, wholesale butcher and exporter." Morris was proud of his occupation and would participate regularly in the Stam-

pede Parade, riding his horse.

Charna Shapiro shared the Manolson branding iron with us at our AGM. The Manolson brand consists of Manolson's initials, M.F., with a bar across the top. It was branded into the right hip of Manolson cattle. The brand served as the logo of the 2004 Manolson family reunion. The branding iron itself is lovingly stored in the home of his granddaughter, Judy Shapiro.



Manolson letterhead.

## *A Joyful Harvest: Special Sneak Preview*

*Continued from Page 1*

ophy of "treating the whole person" at a time when the concept was revolutionary. "You can't practice good medicine without looking into the heart, too," he said. When invested as a Member of the Order of Canada in 1991, he was referred to as, "... one of the first Canadian physicians to recognize and foster the concept of problem drinking as a medical disorder worthy of informed and objective medical care."

*A Joyful Harvest* also tells the stories of individuals who brought Calgary international recognition.

Take, for example, the member of one of Calgary's early Jewish families who hitchhiked to California and landed a role in a silent movie starring Mary Pickford.

Fortunately, he opted to return to Calgary where he made local history by manufacturing the now-famous white hat first seen in the 1946 Calgary Stampede Parade. That hat, which has graced the heads of the Pope, Wayne Gretzky and numerous heads of state, has become Calgary's most universally recognized symbol.

And it was a Calgary-born Jewish television executive who helped to put

Calgary on the world map during the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics. Returning from Toronto to head CTV's host broadcast centre, she was, according to the *Toronto Sun*, responsible, "...for

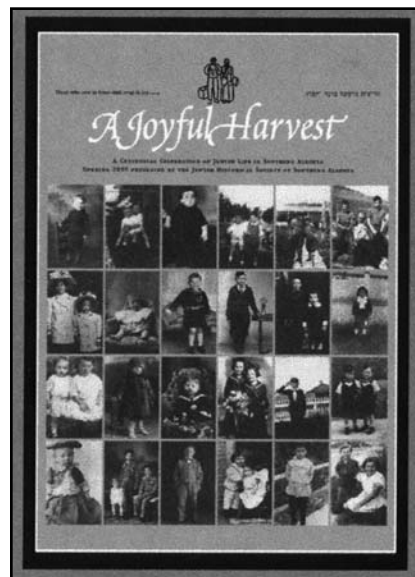


Exhibit Poster

what many considered the best TV presentation in Winter Olympics history."

Other individuals highlighted in *A Joyful Harvest* were born in Southern

Alberta but made their contribution elsewhere. They include a lawyer who helped to shape Canadian legal history; a senator who has promoted bilateral trade with China and Mexico; and a businessman who became the chairman and chief financial backer of the internationally renowned Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Centre.

Another native Calgarian rose to prominence as a senior United Nations official who, throughout his life, devoted himself to the cause of peace. During his distinguished career he worked on the Arab-Israeli peace talks that led, eventually, to Israel's independence, and he later became the director of the United Nations Disarmament Division.

We aren't naming any names at the moment, but a peek at some of the extraordinary accomplishments made by Jews in Southern Alberta gives a mere hint of the truly memorable experience *A Joyful Harvest* promises to be.

See you there! And, if you can't get enough of a good thing, you can start looking forward to one more bumper crop. A book based on *A Joyful Harvest* is already in the works. Like JHSA's popular *Land of Promise*, published in 1996, it will be a keeper.

## Leni Eckmann Hoffman's Coverlet

# A Mother's Gift Redeemed

Leni Hoffman has lived in Calgary since 1970. She married Dr. Burt Hoffman in New York, and spent a number of years in Puerto Rico before moving here.

Leni's maternal family had lived in Lendershausen, Germany since the mid-1700s. Leni was born there in 1930 to Ludwig and Fanny Eckmann (nee Stern). She remembers that her mother and her aunts often worked on needlework projects. Her mother was an expert seamstress and even taught others. Leni assumes that her mother crocheted her white coverlet when she was born, since she has childhood memories of it being on her bed.

She can only assume for she has no one to ask. In July 1939, Leni left her family in Germany to go to Belgium on the last Kindertransport, the legal transport of German Jewish children to safety. She lived in a Jewish children's home until September 1939, when she was sent to a Gentile orphanage on the Belgian coast to ensure her safety.

In May 1940 the Germans invaded Belgium. Jewish children were evacuated to Nice, France, where many perished. The children in the Gentile orphanages were unharmed, but they were moved again, to an institution near Brussels. Leni spent the remainder of the war years there and did not attend school from 1942 to 1944.

She did have some written contact with her mother. It stopped in 1942, when her mother was deported to a concentration camp, where she per-

ished. After the war, in 1946, Leni traveled to the U.S., to her maternal uncle, who had located her through the Red Cross.

Before she was deported, Fanny Eckmann had given the precious coverlet to her good friend Mrs. Worner for safe-keeping—with instructions to keep it for Leni until after the war. Frau Worner held on to it through the decades.

In Germany, a local librarian, Cordula Kappner, was documenting the history of the local Jewish residents, and produced exhibits to educate the community about the long history, and war-time fate, of Germany's Jews. By chance she met Mrs. Worner and learned the story of Leni's family and the coverlet.

Ms. Kappner sought Leni through an ad in a New York German language Jewish newspaper in 1987. Relatives saw the ad and sent it to Leni in Calgary. The two women corresponded.

Leni's son, Ken Hoffman, visited Germany that summer, and learned from Ms. Kappner the story of his grandparents and the fate of the Jewish community in the Holocaust. He brought the coverlet back to Calgary.

Leni and Burt Hoffman traveled to Germany in 1989 and met Ms. Kappner. Leni returned later that year and spoke about her experiences at a Jewish history exhibit. She also met the daughter of her mother's friend, Mrs. Worner, and was reunited with two friends from her pre-war German school days.

In 1994 Leni participated in a similar



*Leni (Eckmann) Hoffman, 1939, in Germany just prior to her departure on the last kindertransport. Photo: Leni Hoffman*

exhibit in Lendershausen. A year later she responded to another invitation. This time the Jewish history exhibit was presented in her former school, and more reunions took place.

Leni Hoffman's daughter and grandson joined her for this visit, and they were able to visit the graves of Leni's grandparents.

They were aware, as were many of Leni's former neighbors, that no such memorials mark the Holocaust-scarred remains of her parents.

Leni's story of her Lendershausen coverlet encompasses tragic, poignant, and ultimately hopeful aspects. We thank her for telling it, and for showing us her family treasure.

## Hyman Cohen and his Champion Race Horses

Hyman Cohen (1893–1962) is remembered as a rancher and cattle dealer, but he also enjoyed a notable career as a race horse owner.

At our AGM his son, Emanuel (Manny) Cohen displayed several artifacts and shared some highlights from his father's career.

Hyman Cohen left Russia in 1907 and, while still in his youth, apprenticed as a cattle buyer for Pat Burns. Cohen later became an independent order buyer and a member of the Cal-

gary Livestock Exchange. He owned a series of ranches in Claresholm, Pincher Creek and at the Little Bow.

A new hobby and venture was begun with the Cohen Pincher Creek Stables

*Continued on Page 7*



*Hyman Cohen, hat in hand, at Claresholm Derby, c. 1936. His horse, ridden by jockey Jack Kipling, won the 1936 and 1937 Derbies. Photo: Emanuel Cohen.*

# Fania Wedro: Forging a New Life in a D.P. Camp

THE CURATORIUM  
OF THE JEWISH SCHOOLS  
in the American Zone of Austria

---

No. 58/47

## Certification

Mr. Cipora Helman

Place of work Hebrew school in Bad-Gastein

Position teacher



Signature of the receiver \_\_\_\_\_

In the name of the Curatorium: \_\_\_\_\_

Salzburg, on 12.11.1947

חקורטוריון היהודי באזור האמריקאי  
באוסטריה.

---

מס' 58/47

**כרטיס-חבר**

הח' ציפורה הלמן

עובדת (ת) בבית"ס העברי בגאסטאין

מאמנת בית-ספר

בתור מאמנת ומנהלת בית ספר

בשם הקורטוריון: \_\_\_\_\_

ולצבורג, יום \_\_\_\_\_

כוחו יפה עד \_\_\_\_\_

כוחו יפה עד \_\_\_\_\_


בשם הקורטוריון: \_\_\_\_\_

יום \_\_\_\_\_

Fania's certificate of employment as teacher in a DP camp and her Department of Labour certificate.

The documents that Fania (Fanny) Wedro presented as part of our AGM program tell a story of hope and determination in a time of ruin and despair. Fania Helman survived the Holocaust by hiding in the forest after the Jews in her hometown of Korzec, eastern Poland (now Ukraine) were "liquidated". She was too young to join the Jewish partisans, but miraculously she managed to survive on her own until the Russians liberated her in 1944. In 1945 she was smuggled across numerous borders until she reached a Displaced Persons camp at Linz, Austria. Since Fania had received an excellent Hebrew education in the modern *Cheder* in her home town, she was able to serve as a teacher in a camp school. In Linz, she met Leo (Leib) Wedro who was from the town of Miedzyrzec, not far from her town of Korzec. They were married in the camp. Once they received their civil marriage documents, Fania borrowed a dress and a Rabbi wrote up a *Ketubah*

(Jewish marriage contract) for them. Leo had an uncle living in Canada so they were able to emigrate in 1948, living in Edmonton until 1972, and in Banff and Calgary since then. As part of her immigration process, Fania had agreed to accept employment in Canada offered to her by the federal government. At the end of October 1949, Fania received a certificate from the Department of Labour testifying that she had fulfilled her obligations. In an accompanying letter, Deputy Minister MacNamara writes: "I am greatly impressed by the contribution made to Canadian economic life by workers so recently arrived from displaced persons camps in Europe. It is my hope that you will find health, happiness and pros-



DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR  
CANADA

DATE OF ISSUE  
**31/10/49**

REFERENCE No.  
**36/133/14508**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

NAME: **WEDRO (HELMAN) Fania**

HAS DISCHARGED THE UNDERTAKING MADE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO REMAIN IN SPECIFIED EMPLOYMENT FOR A FIXED PERIOD OF TIME UPON ADMISSION TO CANADA.

*MacNamara*

MINISTER OF LABOUR

*MacNamara*

(COUNTERSIGNED)

*a MacNamara*

DEPUTY MINISTER

Nov 2/49

(DATE)

perity in the new country of your choice." Fania lovingly keeps these important records, which testify to the rebuilding of her life, in an old Turtles Chocolates box given to her soon after she arrived in Canada.

**JOIN THE JHSSA**

Help record and preserve our local Jewish heritage.

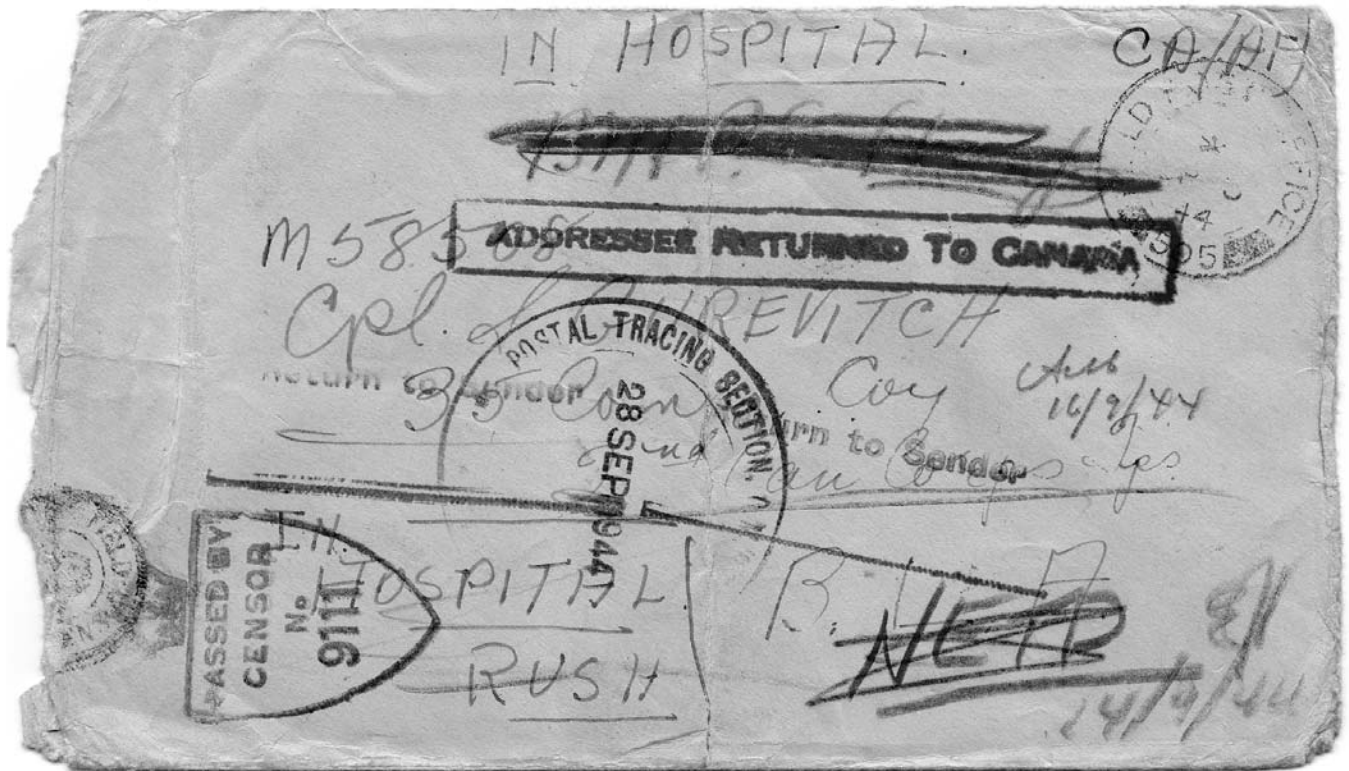
Family membership – \$25

Single – \$18

Patron – \$50

Benefactor – \$100

# Sol Gurevitch: A Letter from the Front



Envelope addressed to Cpl. S. Gurevitch from Private A. Gurevitch, 1944.

Sol and Alan (Curly) Gurevitch, both soldiers in the World War II Canadian army and both serving in Europe, tried to keep in touch during the war. How difficult this could be is seen in the story of a much-stamped envelope which followed Sol during a painful journey he made back to Canada.

The envelope was sent to us by their cousin Lucien Lieberman of Vancouver, who found it in Sol's effects following the veteran's death in 2003.

Curly and Sol grew up on the family farm near Rumsey, but lived in Calgary when the war broke out. Sol was a corporal in the Service Corps, while Curly served with an infantry regiment, the PPCLI, the "Princess Pats."

Lucien Lieberman (also a former Calgarian) describes Sol's odyssey:

"In August 1944 Curly Gurevitch, then serving in Italy with the Canadian Army, learned (probably by letter from home) that his brother Sol had been injured in action in Normandy. He sent a letter to Sol via the Canadian Army postal service.

"Sol was on a motorcycle leading a supply column up to the front on August 8, 1944. The Canadians were

south of the city of Caen and trying to close the gap at Falais. Sol was thrown from his motorcycle, and the lead truck



Sol Gurevitch (right) and another soldier at Butchart Gardens, Victoria, BC, 1943.

ran over his back, rendering him a paraplegic for the rest of his days.

"Sol was transferred from a field hospital in France to a hospital ship which took him to Halifax. He was then transferred on a special hospital car on the CPR to Calgary, arriving at the Colonel Belcher Hospital in early November.

"Curly's letter to Sol passed through the censors and then went on a search for the injured soldier. The letter eventually caught up with Sol at the Colonel Belcher, after being bounced around a number of field hospitals in France and England.

"Sol saved no letters from his time in the War, but this particular envelope tickled his sense of humor."

Sol, despite his handicap, lived a full and active life. (He had moved to a veteran's medical facility in Vancouver.) He passed away in November, 2003, after celebrating his 85th birthday. Curly predeceased Sol by a few years. Their gravestones are situated side by side in the Calgary Jewish cemetery at Erlton.

"We remember with pride our cousins who served Canada during World War II."

## New Material in our Archives

1. An invitation from Mayor Mackay to a Chuckwagon Luncheon at the Stampede Corral in honour of Their Royal Highnesses Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, on October 18, 1951. Dress was to be "if at all possible, Western". Donated by Al Rubin. This invitation is an addition to the previous material Mr. Rubin has donated to the JHSSA archives in the past.

2. Certificates honouring Cecil Horwitz as past president of the Northwest Canadian Council of B'nai Brith, 1950-51 and 1951-52. Donated by Linda Horwitz. The certificates were found among Cecil's papers.

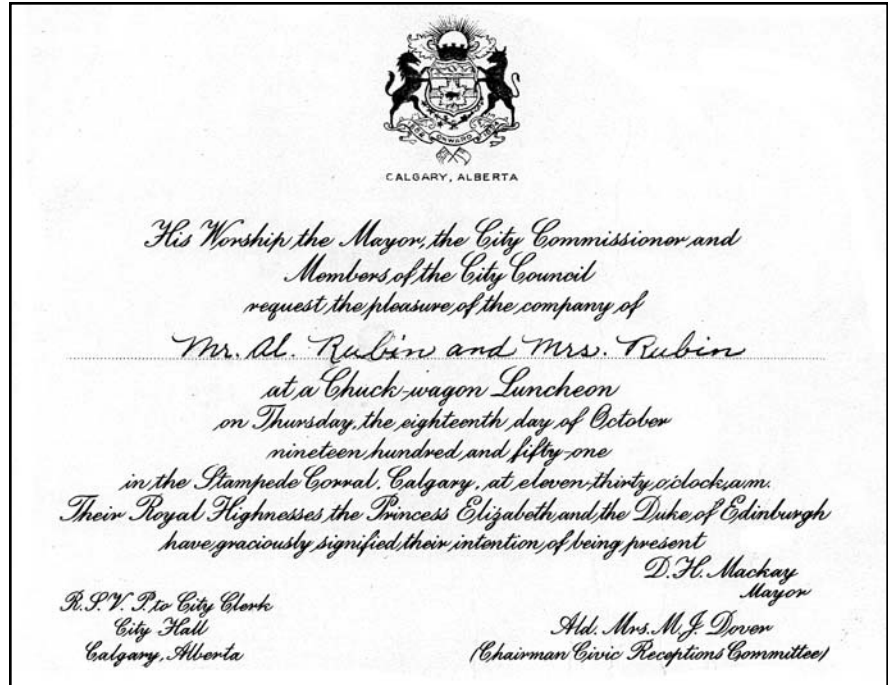
3. From the estate of Adelle Saper we have received a certificate in tribute to Sol Saper for outstanding service to United Israel Appeal – Keren Hayesod presented by the Zionist Organization of Canada in 1958. This donation also includes letters of tribute to Sol Saper from various individuals, organizations and associates in the legal profession. A file of legal papers has been forwarded to the Legal Archives of the Law Society of Alberta. Donated by Lynne Greenberg.

4. The 1922 Marriage Contract of Harry Karsh (d. 1957) and Fannie Rollinger (d. 1994) was donated by their daughter Goldie Steele of Vancouver.

5. Four Marriage licenses dating from 1940 to 1944 were donated by Pat Smolensky. They are for Abraham Segal and Blanche Levitt; Louis Ryder and Francis Belzberg; Sidney Bigman and Lily Belzberg; and Howard Fishbane and Lily Lasowsky .

6. Upon the death of Morris C. Shumiatcher in Regina at the age of 87, Norman Bercovich sent us a large collection of articles written by Mr. Shumiatcher as well as obituaries for him. This donation includes a copy of Schumiatcher's 1979 book, *Man of Law; A Model*, for our local authors collection and a copy of the eulogy given by Mr. Bercovich. Among the articles included are Shumiatcher's address to Pioneer Women Calgary given in honour of Sarah and Zalman Lubinsky and his 1976 article in *Reader's Digest* about Z. Lubinsky's efforts to get the Family Torah Scroll out of Russia.

7. Morris Shumiatcher was the son of Abraham and Luba Shumiatcher and the brother of composer Minuetta



*Invitation from Mayor Mackay to a 1951 Chuckwagon luncheon with Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. Al Rubin was president of Calgary B'nai Brith at the time.*

Shumiatcher Kessler. He grew up in Calgary and attended the University of Alberta. He moved to Saskatchewan to work as legal adviser to Tommy Douglas where he wrote that province's Bill of Rights. Shumy, as he was known, was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1981. The JHSSA has also received from Tema Blackstone a copy of the eulogy that she delivered in tribute to her beloved relative.

8. An album with photos of the 1983 installation ceremony of B'nai Brith Women Chapter #1721. The album contains an invitation to the ceremony.

9. The Jewish War Veterans of Canada uniform of the late Julius "Ziggy" Bleviss was donated to the JHSSA by his sons, Joey and Morris Bleviss. It includes the blazer with insignia and pins and the tie and cap.

10. Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel has given the JHSSA Archives a number of their historic Ark and Bimah table coverings for safe-keeping. Most are not dated but the earliest one is embroidered with the following Hebrew inscription: Donated by Rachel, daughter of Jacob Seret/Sirot?, 1912. This donation also includes the old Chuppah (wedding canopy) used by the congregation. It bears the inscription for its rededication in honour of Minnie and Elliot Zuckier's 50th anniversary in 1990.

### Recent Additions to the Martha & Harry Cohen Library of the JHSSA

*A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People from the time of the Patriarchs to the Present*, edited by Eli Barnavi. This lovely book makes Jewish history come alive.

*I Seek my Brethren*; Ralph Goldman and "The Joint", by Tom Shachtman. This book is a tribute to the tremendous work done by the Joint Distribution Committee and by its tireless worker Ralph Goldman.

*The Jews in the Twentieth Century, an illustrated history*, by Sir Martin Gilbert. A beautiful book by a leading modern historian.

*No Escape: My Young Years Under Hitler's Shadow*, by John Koch. Mr. Koch spoke at our 2003 Annual Meeting about Martin Nordegg. In this book he details his own story of growing up in Germany in the 1930s.

*Shattered! 50 years of silence*, by Felicia Steigman Carmelly. This is a detailed account of the Holocaust in Romania and Transnistria.

*The War against the Jews, 1933-1945*, by Lucy Dawidowicz. This is a classic study of the Holocaust era in Europe.

Works by the following authors were added to Local Authors Collection: Shimshon Heilik, Ayala Manolson, Frank Manolson, Norman Ravvin, and Morris C. Shumiatcher. We have also purchased a copy of *Reflections*, a collection of stories by members of the Writing Club of the Calgary Jewish Centre.



# Exhibit Sponsorship Opportunities

The Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta gratefully acknowledges the support of *A Joyful Harvest* by the Government of Alberta through a generous grant from the Lottery Fund Community Initiatives Program.

Further sponsorship opportunities are available.

Foundation .....	\$2,500 - \$20,000
Benefactor .....	\$5,000
Decade Sponsor .....	\$1,000
Supporter .....	\$500
Feature Panel Sponsor .....	\$250
Friend .....	\$100
Young Friend .....	\$100



Parents and grandparents are warmly invited to celebrate their future "joyful harvest" by honouring their children and grandchildren in a new sponsorship category, Young Friend: \$100 for the first name and \$18 for each additional child.



## Sponsorship categories for A Joyful Harvest 2005 Exhibit

Friend	\$100	_____
Young Friend	\$100	_____
Additional names	\$18	_____
Feature Panel Sponsor (100 panels available)	\$250 - \$499	_____
Supporter	\$500 - \$999	_____
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Patron	\$1,500 - \$5,000	_____
Benefactor	\$5,000+	_____
Other		_____

Please contact our office at 444-3171 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hyman Cohen

*Continued from Page 3*

when Cohen added thoroughbred race horses to the other livestock on his ranch. Cohen horses raced on the Prairie Circuit, in eastern Canada and even in California.

The Cohen jockey silks, registered through the New York Jockey Club, were blue and white with a Star of David on the shirt back and the cap. Manny recalled incidents prior to World War II when bigots displayed a lack of respect for the distinctive silks.

Among the items that Emanuel Cohen presented at our AGM were some early mementos of his father's racing days—a timer watch, a riding crop and his hat. The latter was often used to start races "at the drop of a hat".

Manny also shared some entertaining stories about a number of the family's prizewinning horses.

# Harry and Martha Cohen Library Tribute Cards

### Thank you to our recent Tribute Card supporters:

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Suitable for all occasions, Harry and Martha Cohen Library Tribute Cards keep you in touch with friends and loved ones while supporting the programs and services of the JHSSA.

To send a Tribute Card, please call the JHSSA office (444-3171) or Carey Smith (253 - 5152).

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