

JHSSA DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL RECORD

TITLE: Chevra Kadisha of Calgary fonds

No.: CKC

DATE RANGE: 1904-2014

EXTENT: 14cm of textual records

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The Chevra Kadisha, literally the Holy Society, is Calgary's Jewish burial society, and the Jewish community's oldest organization. It is a not-for-profit society that continues the age-old Jewish tradition of burying the dead with dignity and proper ritual according to Jewish law; the guiding principle is respect for the deceased.

Until 1904 there was no provision for Jewish burials in Calgary, and bodies had to be sent to Winnipeg for interment. The death of infant Goldie Bell in 1904 prompted community leaders to buy a small cemetery site south of the city limits on 'Cemetery Hill', in what became the community of Erlton. The Chevra Kadisha of Calgary was incorporated in 1907 under the aegis of the Congregation House of Jacob. It received its charter on December 4, 1914, with Charles Malkin as president. Elijah Geffen and Jacob Woolfe served after Malkin, who held the office again from 1922-1953, after which he became Honorary President. Other presidents included David A. Dvorkin (1953-1963 and 1964-1966), William Polsky (1963-1964), Harry Goresht (1967-1968), Percy Fishman (1968 -1974), Julius (Ziggy) Bleviss (1974-1994) and William Aizanman (1994-).

Over the decades the Chevra Kadisha has conducted several thousand burials, in association with the firm of McInnis & Holloway, serving the Jews of Calgary as well as those living in rural areas and smaller communities throughout southern Alberta. When Jewish visitors have died in the area, including several World War II service personnel killed during training exercises, Chevra Kadisha has arranged proper care and -- when appropriate -- transportation of their remains.

The work of the Chevra Kadisha is performed almost exclusively by dedicated volunteers, including an active women's auxiliary, who serve on behalf of the society, sewing burial shrouds, performing *tahara* (preparation of the deceased), arranging memorial services and supervising burials.

Chevra Kadisha established a new Jewish cemetery site in the south end of the city in 2005, including a funeral chapel to replace the 17th Ave SW chapel and mortuary, which had been built in 1961.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The fonds consists of minutes, a membership ledger, burial records, burial invoices and published material from the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary. Variant spellings within the records include Chevre Kadisho, Chevro Kadisho, Chera [sic] Kadusha, Chevra Kadusha.

The fonds has been arranged into the following series: Development; Minutes; Burial Records; Published Material.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of fonds

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Chevra Kadisha of Calgary; see series

LANGUAGE: some material is in Yiddish, some material is in English; see series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

ACCRUALS: further accruals expected though not scheduled

GENERAL NOTE: Information for the Admin History is taken from A Joyful Harvest, c 2007, JHSSA
Translations are available for some material. See individual series.
Includes accessions 99-024, 2005-005, 2010-008

Series Title: Development

No.: .01

Date Range: 1910 [copied 1990], 1958, 1972, 1992-1993

Extent: 2.5cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a photocopy of the 1910 Calgary Jewish Cemetery map, a letter regarding the 1958 purchase of land in the name of Chevra Kedusha of Calgary, 2 items regarding cemetery expansion and a handbill for a 1951 fundraising campaign for the construction of a downtown chapel. Also included are a 1992 "Charge Analysis", and documents relating to the purchase of the south cemetery (copies of the offer to purchase and certificate of title, correspondence regarding the closure of the sale, and an engineer's report which includes site maps.)

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Chevra Kadisha of Calgary; William Freedman

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Minutes and Membership

No.: .02

Date Range: 1910-1911, 1927, 1947-1968

Extent: 2.5cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of three sets of minutes from the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary, 1947-1959 (in Yiddish, translation available), 1959-1968 (in Yiddish, translation available), 1967-1968 (in English), as well as a membership (dues?) ledger from 1910/1911, that also includes financial information (in Yiddish, no translation) from June through December, 1910. Several pages of the ledger have handwritten candy recipes from a later date. Also included are a 1927 promissory note for \$300, and a 1957 meeting notice.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

CUSTODIAL HISTORY: membership ledger, gift of Lillian Zuidema. Donor connection is unknown.

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

CONDITION NOTE: The 1910 ledger is in poor shape. Photo or digital copy is available to researchers.

Series Title: Burial Records

No.: .03

Date Range: 1904-1968, 1984, 2003

Extent: 6.5cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of two bound volumes of burial records from the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary; 1904-1957 (in Yiddish, no translation available), 1950-1968 (in English).

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Burial records, gift of Naomi (Belkin) Kerr

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

CONDITION NOTE: The 1950-1968 burial record is in extremely poor shape. Photo or digital copy is available to researchers.

Series Title: Published Material

No.: .04

Date Range: [19--], [201-], 2014

Extent: 2cm of textual records

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of items published by the Chevra Kadisha of Calgary; an undated *Prayers and Rituals* booklet; a coil-bound program from the 100th anniversary banquet in 2014, which includes a history of the organization; a *Grace After Meals* booklet used at the 2014 banquet. Also included is a pre-1950 book of "Mourners' Prayers", published by Hebrew Publishing Company, New York.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: Chevra Kadisha, Barb Libin

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access