

# JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

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## Calgary Jews Face an Epidemic – 1918

By Jack Switzer

The world-wide Spanish flu epidemic—actually a pandemic—in 1918 and 1919 killed 40,000 Canadians. (About 60,000 Canadians died in the 1914-18 Great War.) In Alberta, the influenza killed 4,000. Five hundred persons died in Calgary, then a city of about 50,000. One in six persons caught the flu; nearly every aspect of the city's daily life was affected.

Calgary's Jewish population of less than 1,000 suffered its share of influenza casualties. Eleven Calgary Jews, mainly young adults, died in the worst four months of the epidemic. In one month, between October 19 and November 18, 1918, nine Jewish men and women died. Two more deaths occurred in 1919. (The equivalent fatality rate today would mean 100 Jewish deaths in Calgary.)

As well, six Jewish newborn babies and infants died during the first months of the epidemic. We do not know if they were flu victims; any baby victims would make the Jewish death toll even more startling.

(In comparison, only one Calgary Jewish baby was buried in 1917. Three Jewish adults died in the year before the end of February, 1918. There were no Jewish burials between February and October of 1918.)

The Spanish influenza outbreak (which actually originated in Asia) took a large toll in war-torn Europe through the spring and summer of 1918. Returning soldiers brought the pandemic to North America. On October 2nd, sick soldiers from a westbound train were hospitalized at a camp near Calgary. The disease soon reached the civilian population.

The *Calgary Daily Herald* described Spanish flu symptoms as chills, high-temperature fever, headache, backache, redness and running of the eyes, and aches and pains throughout the body. The 1918-1919 flu was extremely contagious, and could be spread by breathing, coughing, sneezing, and spitting. There was—and is—no quick cure for influenza; victims took analgesics and a variety of dubious medicines. So many prescriptions for

liquor were written that the city's supply ran dry.

Officials played down the severity of the epidemic, but took steps to contain it. Victims' homes were quarantined, albeit inconsistently. Gauze face masks were made mandatory, but many failed to wear them. Recreation and entertainment facilities were closed—theaters, pool rooms, roller rinks, sports venues, and the like.

Public meetings, church services, and most social events were forbidden. This was a typical newspaper social notice, on October 23rd: "Owing to the recent order of the Board of Health the Hadassah chapters Daughters of Zion has been obliged to postpone its monthly meeting indefinitely."

Calgary Zionists canceled a major event which was to celebrate "Declaration Day," the first anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. (A well-attended October 12 Zionist meeting, at which Nahum Sirkin spoke, was held before restrictions were imposed and should in hindsight have been cancelled.)

Some businesses were also told to close, including auction houses, second-hand dealers and furniture stores—an action which affected many Jewish operators. Attempts by the province to reduce the business hours of all retail stores faced strong opposition, and these rules were not enforced in Calgary. Halloween celebrations were canceled.

Late in October the authorities closed all schools. Some had already been converted to hospitals, and Stanley Jones

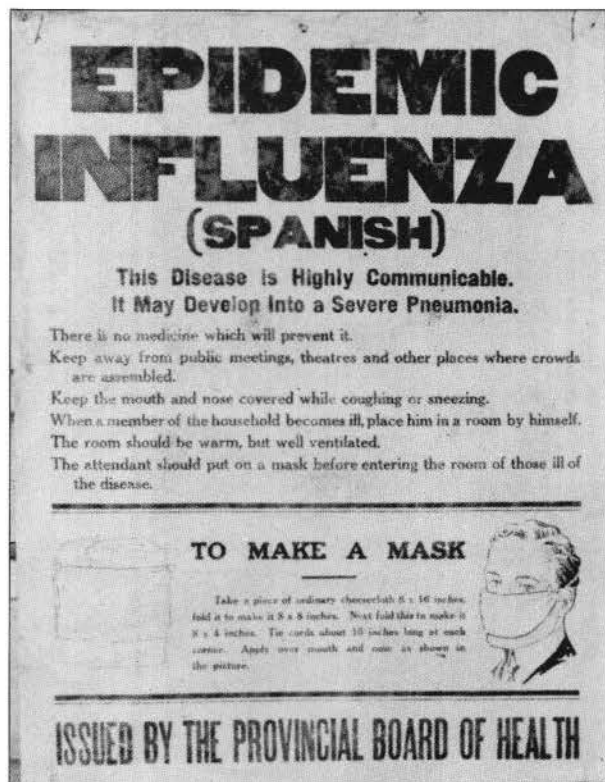


Photo: Glenbow Archives NA4548-5.

School was used as a dormitory for children whose parents had died or who were hospitalized. Other schools housed soup kitchens; many families were unable to cook for themselves.

Jewish women were among those who volunteered to assist the sick. The Ladies' Aid Society set up the Jewish

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## Epidemic

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Emergency Kitchen in the Zionist Hall, in the Strathcona Block, at 707 - 3rd Street East. The *Morning Albertan* noted "'Kosher Kitchen' has been organized by Mrs. B. Ginsberg ... for the purpose of providing Jewish people who are suffering from influenza with soup and delicacies. ... anyone of any denomination will be furnished with supplies.

"Yesterday assisting Mrs. (Harriet) Ginsberg were Mrs. S. Singer, Mrs. Hellman, Mrs. I. Kay and Mrs. Wm. Gordon." Harriet Ginsberg fell ill with influenza, but the aid work went on.

Jewish pioneer Sema Goldenberg worked as a practical nurse at the Emergency Hospital, on 12th Avenue East, where many Jewish patients were treated. One of them was Hyman Cohen, who would later marry her daughter, Mary Goldenberg.

Men with cars were asked to donate their time. Harry Allen, of the Allen Theatre family, organized a group of car owners to drive public nurses around the city, and to deliver food to influenza victims. Charles Bell was among the hotel owners donating linens to sick families.

The first Jewish influenza death was that of Harry Rapaport, the 28-year-old owner of two downtown jewelry stores, on October 19th. His passing merited a newspaper report; he was recalled as "one of the best-known young businessmen in the city," and was noted to have been a composer of popular songs. He had been in Calgary for four years, and his body was

shipped to his family in Minneapolis.

A married couple died next; we know only their last names, from their grave-stones at the old Jewish cemetery. Mrs. Stone died on October 25th, Mr. Stone passed away four days later. Sarah Harrison, age 22, also died on October 29th. A few days later Leah Goldstein died. Coincidentally, her husband worked for the first Calgary victim, Harry Rapaport, and her remains were also sent to Minneapolis.

Two Jewish men, Morris Oleon and Abraham Gopman, died on November 6th. Gopman's death was especially tragic. The 35-year-old immigrant had left his family—wife Bessie and four children—in Russia. Gopman fell victim to influenza during the late stages of their journey to Calgary, and they arrived to find he had died. Friends took the family in, and Bessie remarried some years later. (Their daughter Goldie married Leo Sheftel. See family photo on page 7.)

On November 16th, 28-year-old Sophia Shapero passed away. Bessie Lavin, 22, was the last Jewish victim of 1918; she died November 19th.

The first epidemic had largely run its course by the end of November in 1918. Hospitals gradually closed, schools reopened and business returned to normal. However, within a few weeks new influenza cases appeared; the epidemic's second wave had begun. Fewer cases were reported this time. Schools again closed, but there were fewer restrictions on public-space use than in the first phase.

There were relatively few Jewish fatalities during the second wave. A 2-year-old child, Bernard Grinker, died in January of 1919. In mid-1919 Yeheshua Shloima Schechter died. (Five Jewish newborn babies and infants also died in the first four months of 1919.)

There were minor influenza outbreaks in Alberta during the early 1920s, but the drama and tragic scope of the 1918-1919 epidemic has not been repeated, or forgotten. Survivors recalled the epidemic as a period of stress, but some non-tragic memories emerged. Becky Levitt-Cohen recorded a colorful epidemic memory from her childhood. Everyone in her family was ill except for her father, Jacob Weinborn, who decided to make pancakes.

"He asked my mother where she kept the oil and my father found it and fried the pancakes. When we tried to eat them we threw up. My father had used machine oil."

Modern history's worst epidemic took a huge toll across the country and deprived the Calgary Jewish community of some of its most promising young citizens. However the community was strengthened in some ways.

Jewish women showed they could organize and work independently, and effectively. Certainly the Chevre Kadisha (Jewish burial society) and Rabbi Simon Smolensky were challenged, but it was the Jewish women who risked infection while providing hands-on care and immediate delivery of charity to the sick.

Epidemic-engendered feelings of susceptibility and insecurity likely encouraged Jews to form stronger communal ties; the years following the great epidemic saw a major growth in organizations, both of self-help groups, and of charity outreach societies.

Sources: JHSSA Archives, Glenbow Alberta Library and Archives, Calgary Public Library, Local History Department.



Strathcona Block, 707 - 3 Street SE, Calgary. During the 1918 influenza epidemic, the Calgary Zionist Hall at #709 housed the Jewish soup kitchen. At the time, Shaie Jaffe operated the steam bath. The building was demolished to make way for the civic administration building. Photo - Calgary Public Library, Allison Jackson collection.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The town of Frank, Alberta, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of its tragic landslide on April 29th, was named after its founder, the American Jew Henry L. Frank. Frank served as mayor of Butte, Montana in 1885 and 1886. He first visited the area in 1901 and decided to invest in coal mining there. He died of a stroke in 1908 at the age of 57.

# Barney Gelfand: Calgary's Fast Food Pioneer

By Jack Switzer

Barney Gelfand was a pioneer in the Calgary business community. He was Calgary's most successful and innovative early food-service franchisee, the man who brought Kentucky Fried Chicken to Alberta.

He was also very active in Jewish affairs, a stalwart of Beth Israel, B'nai Brith and Zionist causes. But he most wanted to be remembered as a husband and father. His devotion to his family is evident in a memoir he prepared—on audio tape—for his children.

Much of the following is excerpted from the transcript of that tape, donated to the JHSSA by them.

His father, Tevye Gelfand, and a brother left Russia and emigrated to Argentina, then to Winnipeg. Tevye's wife Rose and son Sidney joined him in Winnipeg in 1910. More brothers arrived and the extended Gelfand family ran a dairy farm in the West Kildonan area just north of Winnipeg. Tevye also had a bread delivery route in the area.

Tevye and Rose had seven children. There were five boys—Sid, Barney (born in 1913), Saul, Irwin (Spike) and Leonard, and two girls, Sally and Mary. Cousins joined them at play.

Barney recalls his parents: "Dad was quite a bit older than mother, and he was very well educated in Jewish law.

He was a Yeshiva "bocher" and he and mother just adored each other; hugs and kisses and loving words were the norm in our house, even though we didn't have very much in the way of a living. Looking back I can see that we were extremely poor. We just didn't know it.

"The only thing they insisted on was an education. That was something everyone must have, whether Jewish or from the land we lived in. And in those days the teacher was always right. If you got the strap at school because you were bad, you also got a tongue-lashing when you came home, because you had to be wrong.

"In our home dad and mother never spanked us. If you did something wrong, he would sit you down and try to explain what you did wrong. That was more effective than any hitting. He was a very gentle type of person.

"At Passover all the family got together, and there was every year my Uncle Lou, who was by this time a "big sport" in Chicago, would come back to Winnipeg. Because dad was the oldest, Lou would come to our place for the first seder. He brought presents for everybody.

"In those days if you could afford it, everyone got new clothes for Passover. Some of my fondest memories are of

the sederim that we had. My uncle Sam was a fantastic cantor. My dad was also a "Chazzan" (cantor) and the hagadah was read in Hebrew and translated into Yiddish. I wish I had the knowledge and ability to sing like they did.

"As we got older, we worked all summer at my Uncle Joel's farm at Stony Mountain. We had to do a man's work. When we came back for the start of school we were given enough money to get a haircut. That was the extent of our payment for working all summer. In later years I would work in the summer for other farmers for three dollars a month and keep (board-and-room). That was a lot of money in those days.

"After school hours I worked for a butcher and delivered meat. The butcher shop was closed from Friday evening to Saturday evening (and on Sunday), so on Saturday nights we had to do all the meat deliveries for the weekend.

"I don't know if people realize what it was like to drive a bicycle up Salter Street Bridge in Winnipeg in forty-five below zero weather, delivering meat. It was no easy chore, but I did these things to make a couple of extra dollars and to help the family if I could.

"I remember quite clearly the day my dad fell ill. He fainted, and we didn't have a telephone so someone ran out to find one and call the doctor. We discovered he had throat cancer. He suffered in a way that I wouldn't like to see anyone suffer. When dad passed away, Sidney was going to college, so I left school and took over the bread route.

"It wasn't easy for a fifteen-year-old boy to deliver bread and work in the winter and in the summer. I would go into the city to get the bread and then stop at shule to say kaddish for my dad, and then go on with my deliveries.

"There were some good times. We all loved sports. My brother Saul and I played a lot of soccer. Saul was a little younger than me, and we were very, very friendly and very close. We were friends more than brothers.

"I was quite a hockey player in those days also, and a good baseball player. I was an all-around athlete.

"When I was about eighteen I decided to leave home and go to Chicago. I worked there for a year, but



The Tevye Gelfand family, Winnipeg, c. 1919. L to R.: Saul, Rose Gelfand, Mary, Sidney (standing), Sally, Tevye Gelfand, Barney. Front – Irwin (Spike). Leonard Gelfand was not yet born. Photo courtesy of Karen Sklar.

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## Barney Gelfand, Fast Food Pioneer

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*Barney and Sunni Gelfand, newlyweds, 1940. Photo courtesy of Karen Sklar.*

I couldn't stay because I didn't have a proper visa. Back in Winnipeg I worked in a second-hand store for a while. I got fed up with that and decided I was going to go out west (c. 1931). I took a bus to Edmonton.

"My brother Sidney had just finished medical school and had practiced in a place called Rossberg, Manitoba for a year or so. Then he moved to the mining town of Nordegg in Alberta. He had some friends in Edmonton, the Kagna family. They asked me to move into their home and gave me a room while I tried to find work.

"There was a picture of (your) mother (Sonya Kagna, known to all as Sunni) in the room—a high school picture. I fell in love with the picture, and wrote to mother in Los Angeles, where she was living then.

"Your mother never had much of a childhood. She never knew her father and I think she was about a year old when her mother died. Her father was a soldier, but was killed during a pogrom.

"She was then raised by some peasants, as a Catholic, so people wouldn't know she was Jewish. Her Uncle Israel, who she adored, dressed as a woman and took her over the border to Poland.

She became one of his children, as a Kagna.

"Her real name was Sandroff. She came to Edmonton when she was about eight or nine, deeply traumatized by all she had been through.

"When we got married (in 1940), we moved into a small basement apartment, over by the municipal golf course. When she became pregnant we bought a little place just off Seventh Street in Edmonton. That is where Elliot was born.

"I worked in a bakery for several years, until Elliot was around four years old. One day

(in 1945) my brother Sidney called me and told me that he had bought a restaurant in the Calgary bus depot and, if I would put up some money and come and run it, I could be a partner with him. So we cheerfully moved with our belongings to Calgary.

"We ran the bus depot restaurant, Mary (his sister) and I, and then my brother Spike came out of the air force and he was there. My cousin Bob and my brother Leonard came out of the army and the air force, and they were all there working. It was just too much. We were not making any money. None of us knew the restaurant business. So I decided to join the Restaurant Association and try to learn as much about the business as I could. And I learned.

"Just at that time, when I thought things were going fine, Greyhound, our landlord, decided they wanted to make the bus depot bigger. The new restaurant contract was given to someone else.

"Then I went into a little place called the Olympic Lunch, where I slaved for hours and hours, getting up at five or six in the morning and working until late at night. I had the help of Jack Chertkow, who I became friendly with.

(Chertkow owned the adjacent Olympic Bowling Lanes.) He said, 'You go into the Olympic Lunch, and when you have enough money you can pay me.' I was able to pay him back and eventually I bought the building."

Success at the Olympic Lunch meant more than feeding bowlers and lunch crowd from the nearby Film Exchange. Barney and his crew—including many family members—made hundreds of sandwiches every day for delivery to local hotel beverage rooms. He also supplied meals to inmates at the Calgary police jail.

He was known for his integrity and generosity. He once loaned money to a customer to allow the man to open his own gardening business. He came to the aid of a stranded motorist, and drove the man to the airport. It was Atco founder Ron Southern; Barney became a food-service supplier to his company.

Barney opened another restaurant in 1951, the Terrace Gardens at the Stampeder Hotel on Macleod Trail. His biggest business move came in 1956 when he responded to an ad in a trade journal for a fried chicken franchise. Harland Sanders, a Kentucky "Colonel," immediately invited him to his home, and a lifelong friendship, as well as a lucrative deal, began with a handshake.

Gelfand soon opened a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet at the Stampeder Hotel. It was only Sanders' fifth unit, the first in Canada, and the first of a dozen or so Gelfand would operate. Colonel Sanders came to the opening, and returned several times to Calgary to visit his good friend and favorite franchisee.

Barney had several other "firsts." He operated several locations offering only take-out service. This technique was efficient for the customer, and profitable for the operator. For a time, Barney Gelfand was the biggest processed-chicken and French-fried potato buyer in Canada; Calgary had the highest per-capita chicken consumption in the world, and much of this was due to Barney and his effective distribution and promotion methods.

Every Sunday afternoon, radio listeners were urged to dial "CHICKEN" and have their orders prepared for pick-up. People talked about the "eleven secret herbs and spices."

In 1960 he expanded the Stampeder

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## Barney Gelfand, Fast Food Pioneer

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Hotel cafe into a major restaurant, Barney's, which included the Georgian Terrace, the Kentucky Room, the Colonel's Room, and of course, a KFC take-out. The Terrace featured a daily buffet lunch, another first for Calgary. A few years later he began operating the restaurant at the downtown Wales Hotel.

Business did not keep Barney from being a community leader. He served a term as president of Beth Israel congregation, and chaired a United Jewish Appeal drive.

He contributed his time and talents to many other Jewish and civic causes. He was the first Jew to serve on the Board of a Catholic institution, the Lacombe Home, and was very involved with the Calgary Tourist and Convention Association, as well as with food-service groups.

He was quick to acknowledge the role of Sunni Gelfand. She was a motivator, assistant, consultant, hostess. She was his partner, in all aspects of their life together.

Barney Gelfand retired in 1971, and he and Sunni moved to Phoenix for several years. They golfed, visited

friends, and returned to Calgary frequently. (Barney's chain was taken over by other entrepreneurs.)

They returned to Canada late in the 1990s to be closer to their children—Elliot Gelfand of Edmonton, and Karen Sklar, Calgary and grandchildren. Sunni, unfortunately, fell gravely ill, and passed away in 1999. They had been married nearly 60 years. Barney missed her terribly, and passed away himself just eighteen months later, in July 2001.

Sources: JHSSA Archives, Glenbow Alberta Archives, Karen Sklar and Dr. Elliot Gelfand.

*Material from our Business files was used to compile the article about Barney Gelfand's business ventures. We are interested in collecting more information about Jewish-owned businesses in southern Alberta. If you or your family owned a business in Alberta, we would be interested in learning its history. Contact the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta office and we will send you our Business questionnaire. We also collect business cards or stationery and photos.*



Barney Gelfand and Colonel Harland Sanders at opening of Georgian Terrace Restaurant, 1960. Photo courtesy of Karen Sklar.

## Willie Sengaus 1918–2003



Willie and Tom Sengaus, c. 1940. Photo courtesy of Joan Smehoff.

Willie Sengaus, the last Jewish farmer in the Rumsey area, passed away on January 27, 2003. Part of the land he farmed was the original homestead of his father, Jewish pioneer Elias Sengaus, who claimed his 160 acres of free land in 1906.

Within a decade, the Rumsey-area settlement, and the nearby Trochu "colony" would come to number nearly seventy families. Various short-term functionaries such as shochets and teachers served the community for brief periods, but Elias Sengaus provided continuous religious leadership. He led the local Jews in the construction of a synagogue/community hall in 1917, and acted as the group's intermediary with the Jewish Colonization Association.

Elias Sengaus married Victoria Isenstein in 1910; a brother, Harry Isenstein, and a sister, Rebecca Silberstein, preceded her to Canada. (Eight of nine Isenstein siblings emigrated to Canada from Russia.)

The Sengaus lived in a simple wooden house on the homestead. By 1918 they had four sons, Tom, Harold, Ben, and Willie. All the boys attended the nearby Tolman school, where most students were Jewish. Their many Calgary cousins visited in the summer; the Sengaus boys, in turn, had many Calgary connections. Willie, for example, was a member of the Calgary AZA chapter.

Most Jewish farmers left the land in the 1920s, and moved to local towns or to Calgary, but the Sengaus family—and a handful of others—stayed.

Tom and Harold Sengaus joined the RCAF in World War II. Willie served with the Army Signal Corps. After the war he worked briefly in Calgary, and then

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# Louis Leonoff, Calgary's Earliest Private Detective

By Cyril E. Leonoff

Located on the Southern Bug River some 40 kilometres upstream of its juncture with the Black Sea, Nikolayev was a prosperous port city in the Ukraine with a big shipbuilding industry. It was here that Joseph Leonoff owned and operated his own store. In 1889, Joseph married Sara Derfill from the nearby city of Kherson. While the young couple settled in Nikolayev, Louis, the first of six children, was born in September 1890 in the bride's hometown of Kherson.

The Leonoff family had lived in the Nikolayev vicinity quite comfortably over several generations. However, in the late 1800s, economic conditions were declining. The government was corrupt, the Jews were being blamed and used as scapegoats, and pogroms were developing. When the ship workers went on strike, with armed bands roaming the streets, Joseph Leonoff had to close his store, shutters and all. However, he wouldn't leave the premises. He had his gun; he had it loaded. He said, "If anybody breaks through here, I'm going to get as many of them as I can before they get me." Thankfully nothing transpired, but from then on Joseph resolved that he did not want his children to lead this kind of life. He was

going to go to America, "even if I have to dig stones for a living."

Leaving family and possessions behind, Joseph Leonoff arrived in Winnipeg in 1903. As it turned out, although he never had done any physical labour before this, his first job in Canada was working with a pick, shovel, and a wheelbarrow. He helped to dig the foundations for Winnipeg's Royal Alexandra Hotel and the CPR viaduct over Main Street. By 1904 Joseph had re-established in business as a storekeeper and was able to bring his family over to Winnipeg.

Arriving in Winnipeg at age 13 with his mother and siblings, eldest son Louis Leonoff completed his education in the English school system of Manitoba. An enterprising young man, at the age of 19 he was on his own and married. His bride was Sarah Schatzky, daughter of a pioneering family who, in 1892, had homesteaded in the Hirsch Colony, Saskatchewan. She was 17. Because he was conversant in Winnipeg's commonly-spoken ethnic languages—Polish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish—Louis gained employment as an interpreter with the Winnipeg Police Department. It was here that he obtained his police training.

Soon after an opportunity developed in private business. Louis learned that Macdonald Detective Agency, headquartered in the Royal Bank Building at Main and William Streets and across from City Hall in the heart of Winnipeg's financial district, was looking for a qualified person to open a branch office in the expanding post-war West. So Louis, then just 28, took on the challenge of running a Calgary office for the firm. He arrived in Calgary mid-1919 with his wife and three young children, Lyall, aged 8, Vera 6, and Melvin 4-1/2 who started school in Calgary.

Louis Leonoff opened the Calgary office of Macdonald Detective Agency in the old Herald newspaper building. The agency carried out general detective work for private companies. Its mainstay was work for the insurance industry investigating potential fraud cases. Melvin, then 5, recalls getting onto a streetcar with his mother, and seeing his father in the same car. He started to call out "Daddy," but was shushed by his mother, because she realized that Louis was on assignment tailing a suspect.

Louis ran the Calgary office for three years. Over this time the agency became well established, having office staff and a number of investigators to carry on the work. However, by 1922 Louis was ready to resign. There were several reasons: the hours were long and irregular; his wife Sarah wanted her family to be brought up close-by their relatives in Manitoba; and the work was dangerous, especially for a man responsible for the support of a young family. The family returned to Manitoba where Louis tried various business occupations. First he was a storekeeper in Portage La Prairie. Then, during the Depression years into World War II, he was a commercial traveller operating out of Winnipeg. Louis died in January 1943 as a result of a car accident during a business trip to western Ontario; he was 52. Sarah Leonoff lived on for another quarter century, to the age of 74.

Cyril E. Leonoff, who has written this story about his uncle Louis Leonoff, is the Historian of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia.



Private detective Louis Leonoff in Calgary, c. 1919. Photo courtesy of Cyril Leonoff, Vancouver.

## JOIN THE JHSSA.

Help record and preserve  
our local Jewish heritage.

Family membership – \$25

Single person – \$18

Patron – \$50

Benefactor – \$100

## Willie Sengaus

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returned to the family farm, by now enlarged with the purchase of available land in the area. He married Stella Sjoren in 1951. They raised three sons in their new home, the disused synagogue building that the family moved to their land and renovated in 1949.

Elias Sengaus lived on the farm until his death in 1956. Family matriarch Victoria Sengaus died in 1965. Willie's brothers all died prior to 1994. Willie's funeral was held in the Rumsey Community Hall, and he was buried in the town cemetery.



# Recent Additions to our Archives

The JHSSA has been fortunate to obtain a number of important new additions to its archives and library in recent months.

## Alberta Registries

A significant recent donation is that made by Rabbi Abraham Postone. Rabbi Postone and his wife Evelyn have served the Jewish communities in both



Testimonial Dinner Dance  
In Honor Of  
Rabbi Abraham Postone

*Invitation to 1979 Shaarey Tzedec dinner honouring Rabbi Postone. JHSSA archives courtesy of Sam Goresht.*

Edmonton and Calgary throughout many years. They will be leaving Alberta at the start of the summer to live closer to their daughter in Vancouver. All long time Albertans have fond memories of the Postones and of the role they have played in Jewish life in the province. Rabbi Postone's donation of five books of the Alberta Registry of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths attests to the important role he played in the personal history of many Albertans. These volumes contain entries ranging from 1913 to 1993 created by Reverend A. Pinsky, Rabbi I. Haft (Mrs. Postone's father) and by Rabbi Postone himself, both in Edmonton and in Calgary. These registries are a vital source of information for the Hebrew dates of these important life cycle events and for the Hebrew names of the individuals involved. Also donated were programs for various community events in which Rabbi Postone participated or was honoured and numerous newspaper clippings.

## Calgary Hadassah Wizo Collection

Calgary Hadassah Wizo has donated a large collection relating to the history of the various local Hadassah chapters

and their activities until 2001. The collection consists of 20 large display boards and five storage boxes containing minutes, photo albums and scrapbooks that chronicle the major projects such as the Bazaars and Galleria. This collection will serve as an important source of information for any historian researching the role of Jewish women in communal life.

## Lethbridge Talmud Torah Ledger

The Lethbridge Talmud Torah Ledger from 1948-1958, given to us by Hymie Davids, is a most important addition to our archive. This handwritten record lists all the students, their attendance and the curriculum taught. The opening page lovingly records in Hebrew – "1948 the first year of the State of Israel"

## Ben Roginsky Collection

The JHSSA received a box of newspaper clippings, publications and programs from the estate of Ben Roginsky (1916-2003). Much of this ephemeral material is important for recording the

activity of our local social and cultural organizations. This collection includes:

- 1949-50; 1960-61 Pioneer Women of Calgary New Year Greeting Booklets
- 1955-56; 1959-60 Jewish Art Calendars, distributed by the Calgary Herald
- 1967 Danny Kaye and Gadna Israel National Youth Services Orchestra Tour concert brochure and program.
- 1971 State of Israel Bonds Dinner celebrating Ben Gurion's 85th birthday
- 1974 Shaarey Tzedec Fasman Chapel Campaign letter
- 1974-75 registration card for Jewish Education (Calgary Hebrew School and I.L. Peretz school)
- 1975 JNF Dinner honouring Maurice Paperny invitation and reply card

Thank you to all those who have given us material for our archival collection.

# New Photo from our Archives



*The Gopman family, Russia, prior to their emigration to Calgary to join Abraham Gopman, c. 1918. Mother Betty Gopman and her children arrived to find he had just died in the influenza epidemic. L to R: Baba Gopman, Norman, Morris, Bessie. In front: Goldie, Johnny. Goldie married Leo Sheftel in 1935. The widowed Bessie later married Ben Gurevitch. Photo courtesy of Harriet Libin.*

## JHSSA News

### Library Donations

Thank you to all those who have made donations to our Harry B. Cohen Library in honour of a special occasion. Books have been added to the library with the help of the following donations:

In honour of Sid Macklin on his 80th

birthday, by Tiby & Azriel Presma; Muriel Dvorkin & Sol Nelson; Cipora Zadik; Arlein & Dov Chetner.

In honour of Therese Nagler on her special birthday, by Barbara & Jay Joffe.

In memory of Wilfred (Vav) Walker, by Ethel Allman. In honour of Martha Kushner (Edmonton) on her special

birthday, by Ethel Allman.

In honour of Francis Bondaroff (Montreal) on her special birthday, by Linda & John Barron; Toby, Stuart, Siera and Thea Libin; Lisa Barron and Evan Korchinski.

Library books can be inscribed as the donor wishes for a minimum donation of \$36.

## Wanted: Jewish Firsts and Bests

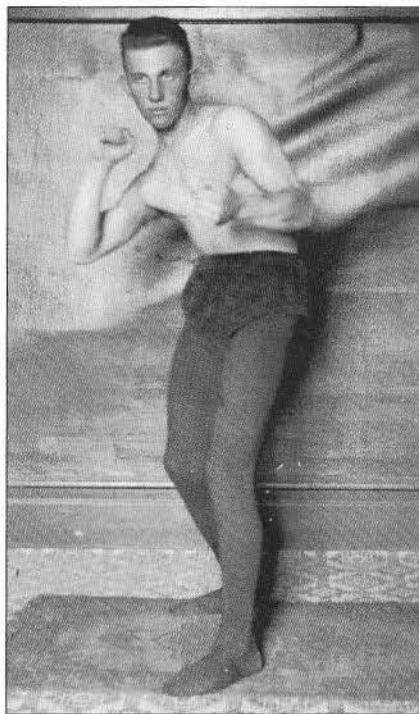
The JHSSA's Alberta 2005 centennial exhibit, *A Joyful Harvest*, will tell in words, photos and documents, the story of how southern Alberta's Jews have become an integral part of the province's cultural heritage. People, places and organizations will form the core of the 100 major display panels, but notable dates and facts—Jewish firsts and bests—will also be featured.

This issue of *Discovery* features a number of such firsts—the first KFC franchise in Canada and the first private detective in Calgary. We can also mention Judah Schumiatcher, the first Hebrew teacher; Fanny Malkin, the first Jewish teacher in the public school system; Hattie Joffe, the first Alberta Life Master American Bridge player; Muriel

Kovitz, the first female university Chancellor in Alberta and many more. The photo below features Calgary teen boxer Harry Woolfe, who lied about his age and became the youngest ever Royal Northwest Mounted Police officer. He was also the first Alberta Jew to become a Mountie. He served with his cavalry group in France in WWI. Woolfe married Calgarian Debbie Marks, worked here in the film exchange and later moved to Vancouver. He died at 103, the oldest-ever mounted police veteran. Harry Woolfe was a Jewish first.

Do you know any Jewish firsts? Has anyone in your family stood out in the community? Can you tell us of achievements to be lauded, obstacles overcome or honours to be recorded?

We are looking for these stories from any area of endeavour—sports, business, volunteerism, academia, music, medicine, whatever. Please call our office at (403) 253-8600 ext. 209 or send us a note at the address below.



Harry Woolfe, Calgary, c. 1915. JHSSA Photo Archive, Dave Spindel collection.

### Membership Additions and Renewals

(Since the February 2003 *Discovery*)

#### Calgary

Harriet Barrett  
Calgary Jewish Academy  
Trudy Cowan  
Betty Mayer  
Judy Shapiro & Richard Bronstein

#### Out of town

Lillian Fishman, La Jolla, CA  
Stan Gutman, N. York, ON  
Leah Kellog, Santa Fe, NM  
Sylvia Polsky, Vancouver, B.C.  
Miriam Roth, Seattle, WA  
Rebecca Weisser, Portland, OR  
Steve Wien, Overland Park, KS  
Betty Yan, N. York, ON

### Correction

Thank you to all those who called to say that the unidentified woman at the left of the NCJW photo in our last issue was Sarah Bercuson. The woman identified as Faith Riback is Beryl Libin.

### DISCOVERY

#### Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta

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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 J.H.S.S.A.

Please address all communications on editorial and circulation matters to:

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