



JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

EDITION 2, VOLUME 1

SPRING 1991

More Discoveries

by Jay Joffe

It is with great satisfaction that we present our second edition of DISCOVERY. We hope you enjoy reading about our early pioneers. All the stories are interesting but one is unique. As far as we know, the review of the Baltzan Journal is the first time that excerpts have been published in English from this beautifully written, first hand account of pioneer life. A special thanks to the Calgary descendants of Jacob Baltzan (Mrs. Ida Horwitz and her children) for making this memorable journal available to the Jewish Historical Society.

Your interest in our Alberta Jewish heritage is appreciated and we welcome any submissions about your family's history in the province.

Two general meetings have been held this year. The first featured, Dr. Henry Srebnik from the University of Calgary who spoke on the History of the Jews in Canada. The second featured Dr. Howard Palmer, also from the University of Calgary and author of "Alberta, A New History", who spoke on Anti-semitism in Alberta, a historic perspective. Dr. Palmer's talk was followed by a panel discussion. These meetings have been very well attended and received. Your continued support and interest have been most encouraging to all our volunteers.

Volunteers Assist with Glenbow Archives

by
Ruth Carnat

When Jay informed me there were Jewish Community Council and National Council of Jewish Women papers to be sorted at Glenbow, I had no idea of what was in store. When I spoke to National Council of Jewish Women members, for volunteers, I was delighted with their response.

We had an orientation meeting at the Glenbow with Doug Cass, our Archivist, and now, teams of two or more will continue meeting, reading, sorting and discarding every Wednesday for two or more hours until all the material has been pro-

cessed. It will continue to be fascinating as we encounter old minutes, costs of functions, donations and names of people we knew and still know intimately as well as those no longer with us.

We must never minimize the importance of Archives. It is our history: that of our own Jewish Community Council, and that of one of our oldest charitable volunteer organizations. We are indeed fortunate the Glenbow Museum is a reality, and is willing and eager to help us preserve these precious records of events and people of a quarter of a century ago.

In addition to National Council of Jewish Women members—Phyllis Gelfand, Fanny Raisen, Lillian Weiner, Bertha Gold, Anne Brodsky, Minnie Zuckier, Dinah Spindel, Tillie Cohen and myself—Abe Gold and Celia Brovender have also volunteered.

Featured in this issue

- The Jacob Baltzan Memoirs
- Rumsey Reminiscences
- Nate Horodezky — Calgary Newsboy, 1911
- The Origins of the old Cemetery
- Volunteers assist with Glenbow Archives

CALGARY NEWS TELEGRAM NEWSBOY WINS 1ST PRIZE.



The Calgary News Telegram. Thursday, December 7, 1911. A 14-Year-Old Calgary Newsboy has record of which he may be proud—Nate Horodezky: real live wire.

Coming from Gomele, Russia

by Dinah Spindel

Nate Horodezky (1900-1986) arrived in Calgary in 1910 with his older brother Fred, twin sister Sarah, and his step mother. His father Louie and oldest brother, Jack, had immigrated in 1907 and gone to Calgary on the advice of friends in Montreal.

They applied for homestead land and each received a 1/4 section, located 8 miles south of Rumsey, for

cont'd

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\$10. To get to their land they had to go to Lacombe on the train, and from Lacombe they had to get someone to take them to their land. All of their neighbors laughed at their misfortune as their land was gumbo with no trees or hills for grazing cattle. Louis Horodezky had 3 years to build a place to live and break 15 acres, as per the Homestead Act stipulation.

As Louis was a very orthodox man and not at all handy at anything, he got someone to dig a sod hut about 5 ft. deep and 12' x 10' for a room. They built it up with 4 1/2 ft. of sod and covered the top with sod for a roof. The floor was earthen. When it rained it leaked in. Jack stayed in Calgary working for the C.P.R. He saved enough money to send for the family and Louis and Jack met them at the C.P.R. station. When they arrived, Louis rushed the boys to the sweat bath on 3rd St. East, which was at the same location, until 1972 when the area was torn down for urban renewal.

Brother Fred went to work carrying ice for the C.P.R. in Calgary. As there were no schools in the Rumsey area, Nate and Sarah, age 10, stayed in Calgary with a married sister, Rose Dworkin and her husband who had arrived the previous month.

Nate started selling newspapers after school and saved every penny to support the family. He sold the Calgary News Telegram and the

Calgary Herald. He especially pushed the telegram, as there was one cent more profit per copy. It was an odd paper, more of a scandal sheet and he won a pair of skates as top sales boy the first year. He also sold the EYE OPENER whenever it came out. It was a terrific paper to sell when it was available.

"The fellow that wrote the EYE OPENER was a real drinker. Bob Edwards was his name. He used to get into trouble with Art Bennett. He was the biggest lawyer in Calgary and Bob would always ridicule him. R.B. Bennett had a lot of power and he got the C.P.R. to refuse to carry the EYE OPENER out of Calgary. There never were enough papers to ship out. Bob Edwards put the paper out once or twice a month, or less if he was too drunk. He wrote mostly gossip stuff about the big shots and ridiculed them and showed their weaknesses. There was nothing that they could do, because you can't sue a man for libel if he isn't worth anything. It was lots of fun."

Nate made from \$5.00 to \$10.00 a day selling the papers. He saved every cent of course, except for board money. As he was a kid, the banks wouldn't take his money for deposit. But the post office took savings with a bank book and he opened an account there. He made his daily deposits of \$4.00, \$5.00 or more until the employer asked him where he got so much money. He replied "It's none of your business."

At 10 years of age he had to change his living arrangements as his sister was not organized for him to have meals after school and rush out to his special customers. He moved to Izzy Goldenberg's where he had the best board you can think of and the best place to sleep.

His father wasn't managing well on the farm. Once he came to Calgary to go to the dentist because he had tooth aches. But he had no money. Nate took him to a dentist in an office upstairs on 8th Avenue and 1st Street West. The dentist said that his teeth were all rotten and had to come out. Nate assured his father that he had saved a few hundred dollars. So he got a new set of teeth for 35 or 40 dollars.

In 1912 he came to Calgary to see Nate and convinced him to work on the farm during the summer and to visit his mother. When he went to the farm, he was disappointed to see that there was nothing done since they had arrived in 1910, the family was still living in their sod hut. Some of the farmers had had log houses built, but they cost a couple of hundred dollars. Nate convinced his father to hire someone to build a log hut and he would pay for it, and this was done. Then Nate asked his father to get a water well dug as they had to go 3 miles for water. The well and windmill were paid for and Louis was all set.

In 1914, Nate's father came into Calgary and told him it was time to quit school and become a farmer. They would farm Jack's land as well and there was other land to rent. This challenge appealed to Nate. He said good-bye to his dear friends and moved to the farm. The first thing he did was buy 2 horses and harnesses, but he didn't know how to hook them up to a wagon, or how to do anything about farming. He went to his closest neighbor, Clark, a Scotchman. Mrs. Clark sent her 12-year-old daughter Peggy home with Mr. Horodezky to show him how to harness the horses. They had wonderful neighbors, and never experienced any anti-semitism.

To supplement their income, there was winter occupation with the railway maintenance crew. By 1915 Nate was a travelling inspector for Natural Resources for the C.P.R.

They learned to farm by watching and asking. 25 acres were added to work on every year. Fred and Jack joined Nate in 1916 and they prospered. ♦

Discovery

Editors **Sid Macklin, Zena Drabinsky, Jay Joffe**

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.

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Excerpts from The Jacob Baltzan Memoirs

by Michelle G.
Stirling

An Overview

"How can one carry out a farming enterprise when it snows right after Yom Kippur?"

Jacob Baltzan was soon to find out the answer to his question. He was 32 years old and seeking refuge on the Jewish Farm Colony of Lipton, Saskatchewan. Refuge? Surely the Baltzan family of Leova, Bessarabia, in Russian-Rumania were one of the most powerful and respected families of the region. But the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 heralded the destruction of Czarist aristocracy, and as usual, the country needed a scapegoat...the Jews.

Baltzan's memoirs lovingly describe his early life in Leova in great detail. Unlike many Jewish immigrants who were escaping poverty in the Pale of Settlement or the large centres, Baltzan left behind a thriving family business and properties, including an elegant estate which had been in the family for over 150 years, to join his brother Moishe, who had proceeded him. Though he had been raised in a largely Hassidic environment, his parents had insisted on exposing him to modern thought, especially Zionism, and now this gentleman, this intellectual, was about to experience the new Zion of Baron de Hirsch, just south of Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

Prepare to be amused by his recollections en route to his new home. Baltzan's own thoughts were priceless as he envisioned a European cultural paradise on the prairies, even as the rails clickety-clacked beneath him. And, of course, he was looking forward to celebrating Succoth.

Here's a sample of his conversation with Sam Bondar as they made their way home to the colony in a rough wagon upon his arrival in Saskatchewan.

"Do you have a succah?" I asked in an attempt to get his interest in things like that.

"Succah? What succah?" He turned his head to me. "You think you're in Lemberg? Who needs it!" I became angry.

"Jewish colonists in a Jewish colony don't make a succah? No matter



The Baltzan Family in front of their Edmonton home. Pictured from left to right; Jacob Baltzan, daughter Katie, and wife Hinda. Ida Baltzan (Horwitz) is seen with the umbrella and the child on his mother's knee is Hymie.

how free they are, how could they not enjoy a natural, green succah where a Jewish farmer in his own colony has completed his harvest, cleared his fields and is preparing for winter?"

Again he reiterated. "You'll see."

"Do you have a synagogue? A prayer meeting? A shochet?"

"No, none of these," he replies, and looks at me as if to say, "Why are you picking on me?"

"How old is the colony?" I wanted to know.

"Already four years," he answers curtly.

"So in four years the Jews couldn't get things in order?" I asked angrily....

You'll discover for yourself," he replied.... "Why do you pick on my bag of bones? See that fire? There lives a Jew. And over there all those lights, those are lights from Jewish farm homes."

"Why scattered? Aren't they all on

one street like the German or Bulgarian colonies?"

Poor Jacob's rude awakening was just beginning. The story became more grim as he was introduced to Jews living not only in poverty, but literally in dirt! Dugouts - "boredays" as they were known—were his welcoming succah.

"...At the table I remarked that we were performing the ritual of 'inviting the guests to the succah' in a dugout instead of in a large, beautiful succah I had pictured in the Jewish colony."

"Are you still so fanatic?" asked the woman (of the house). "I can't see you as such. Do you miss the succah?"

Jacob couldn't resist expressing his true feelings.

"Miss it, Madam?" I blurted out. "In our city we fabricated, painted succahs according to what one could afford. And indeed, the succah is a

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national tradition and it is a joy to celebrate Succoth and even more so in a Jewish colony. I would expect a completely green succah, made of home grown vegetation which you have no lack of, I see. Here you can feel free. You are your own boss, not another's tenant to be wary of supervisors such as we had back home. Here you're free and when G-d has helped you harvest, why not have a Succah at Succoth?... Here in the colony I believe that people can find time for spiritual things. It is after all, the Thanksgiving holiday, for now the harvest is completed. And obviously, you did harvest something. Notwithstanding, the frost did come early at Rosh Hashona, but there was something left from your crop. So why should we neglect such a small item. We could have been non-Jews in Russia or Rumania without taking on field work in this free Canada."

I sensed an antagonism toward me...."

What an eloquent record of early prairie life—early Jewish prairie life—Jacob Baltzan has recorded. And what a beautiful gift to us all, humorously, vigorously, taking us on the pioneer trail.

"Here you spent the summer?" he demands of his brother when they arrive at a shack.

"Yes. We slept here. Fifteen to twenty young men... including our partner Jampolsky. They helped him with his work."

"What do you need a partner for? And what work do the people do? I see no accomplishment."

"What do you mean no accomplishment? We made hay enough to sustain the cows and horses for a whole winter."

"This you did all summer? You milked cows, so what did you do with the milk from the cows?"

"We produced cream using a cream separator."

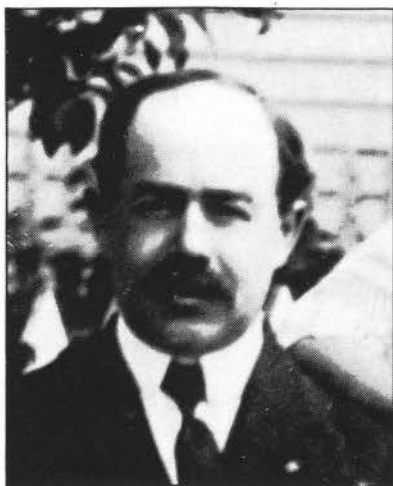
Jacob was stunned to next hear that the milk was fed to the calves, not made into cheese, that the cream was churned into butter, and that the colony sustained itself on butter as there was no kosher meat, except from Winnipeg and then only in winter. Herring was the colony staple.

"Mr. N. had farmed for several years and both house and farm indi-

cated much poverty. Lord protect us! Back in Bessarabia, a peasant who barely farmed two dunams of land lived better. Here with 160 acres, people existed in abject poverty. And the people tried to disguise it with French and Rumanian expressions and then get away with serving only a black cup of coffee—nothing else.

Who and what was to blame? What was happening here? Why can't people make a living? Why are the children not being educated? Why is there no Jewish center?"

For those readers who grew up on the prairies, all of Jacob Baltzan's commentary will bring back sweet memories.



"We walked across the prairie to shorten the journey to about three miles. The grass was wet from the rain and we got quite wet and had to roll up our pant legs."

For those whose families or relatives were some of the unfortunate first wave of pioneers to Lipton, Baltzan's subsequent revelations are heart-rending.

The MacDonald brothers of Fort Qu'Appelle were wealthy bankers and landholders with strong political connections to the C.P.R. and the government. When the J.C.A. (Jewish Canada Agency???) was desperately seeking a home for ousted, wandering Rumanian Jews, marooned in Hungary by cruel political upheavals at home, they were offered territory in Saskatchewan; free homesteads to be underwritten by Baron de Hirsch. The Jews were promised houses, animals, supplies and land, all to be paid for by the Baron. Instead, a tragedy...

"This group of 136 souls arrives in

the spring of 1901. No one had prepared ahead for them. They caught cold in the tents when the cold rainy days ensued. They slept in the dampness, and further aggravated by the lack of nutrition for themselves and their children, eventually a diphtheria epidemic broke out. They then spent time in quarantine helpless, lonely, hungry, sick and without the language necessary to communicate. Many children died there, sacrificed to the dreadful disease and laid to rest in Christian burial grounds in one large grave."

MacDonald took the money, but he never delivered the goods.

Baltzan's revelations take a great deal of time to uncover. Unlike these Jews, he came of his own volition, with money, with family, with some way prepared for him. No wonder there was no synagogue. No wonder the poor Rumanian Jews quietly grieving and barely struggling along while their robust Russian brothers, here by choice, confronted and conquered (as best they could) the obstacles to survival and progress.

The chapter headings in Jacob Baltzan's "Memoirs of a Western Jewish Pioneer" are quite expressive in themselves.

"I become acquainted with the Prairie and Milk a Cow"

"We Meet Mr. Jampolsky"

"The Congregation Prays with a Quorum"

"We Prepare our Winter Nest"

"We Dig a Well and Build a Barn"

"We Find a Bonanza"

Today we are so removed from the hard labours of a survival environment that Baltzan's moving testimony of the pleasures of Shabbat take on new meaning...

"The season remained beautiful and warm, it was a pleasure to work. We carried on this way till Friday when all work ceased and we began to prepare for our day of rest. We were happy to welcome the Sabbath after all that hard work which for us was so foreign.

Saturday we would visit with friends. Mr. N. and Mr. Jampolsky would return the visits, all the while recognizing our accomplishments and admiring our eagerness in our work. We were glad that our work continued systematically without interruption and much was accomplished considering the short time we'd been at it.

The evenings were extremely long and also the Sabbaths were taken up with enjoying our well-lit, warm, comfortable house and we could appreciate the fact that we had thought ahead. We felt rewarded...and found real enjoyment in it all."

From laying floors to baking bread, Baltzan and his brother Moishe had little choice but to learn by doing. Their first experiment with bread was not as successful as the beautiful floor they made for Mr. Jampolsky. The bread was so hard you had to cut it with an axe.

Some diligent study with the local women put things right, though their first attempts at braiding challah left them "...experimenting with the twists, each time kneading them differently till the dough was filthy black and we had to forego the pleasure of a challah for Sabbath."

The miraculous appearance of Mr. Dragushen provided the Baltzan's with all the farming knowledge they would need for summer; and Mr. Dragushen also instructed them in the art of making pita bread and in stone masonry. You really have to read the full text to appreciate the hands-on efforts and rewards of early Jewish pioneer life.

Still, the Jewish pioneers of the colony were frustrated in their desires to have a Jewish community. The law of the land required that farmers live on their sections of homestead property—so the formation of a town was out of the question. Land inspectors would take away your homestead privileges if they found you were not living on the land, and for those who did understand farming, they knew it was impossible to "commute." The arrival of the Latvian shochet heralded a return to kosher meat for the community, but the Roumanian Jews disliked outsiders, so Jacob Baltzan ended up a kind of go-between to settle regional hostilities.

The entire memoirs of Jacob Baltzan are a treasure trove of anecdotes about pioneering resourcefulness. Today as we travel between major cities in hours by car or plane, we rarely think of the days when travel by sled across unmarked prairie could mean death if a sudden winter storm blew up. Today, so far removed from nature, most of us think of trees as things that are found in parks. An episode entitled "The

Forest Prays" is a moving account of the lonely, yet humbling power of the natural beauty of the prairies.

"I once noticed one of our neighbors emerging from the woods, a smile of self-satisfaction on his face.... As I passed by, he stopped to tell me that one of his parents had passed away in old Rumania. He wished to say kaddish, but there was no full service. That is why he stole away early in the morning to the deepest part of the woods and stopping near a large tree, he enjoined the woods as his minyan. There he prayed, read some psalms, and said the kaddish.

I asked him how he felt about saying it in the woods? His answer was that in all sincerity, he felt real joy. It seemed to him that the trees answered, "Amen".

I looked at him. I did not know him as a big believer nor a fanatic in any manner, a very intelligent person—and yet—the strength, the Jewish power of "Honour your mother and father" is so strong that no one can reason about it.

"My sins I remember." I kept my eyes on my neighbor. One cold, bleak morning, I spied on him (not a nice thing to do, but I could not contain my curiosity) as he went into the woods and I followed him at a distance. He paused near a large tree deep in the woods and started saying something. At one point, he grasped the tree and with extreme devotion loudly proclaimed, "Magnified and sanctified be G-d's great name". Snowy leaves, made light by the frost, flew in the air like feathers. It seemed as if souls, long departed, were flitting about and amongst them the souls of his dear departed parents. It was so awe inspiring that I answered together with the whole forest, "May his great name be blessed forever and to all eternity," and I could swear that the trees trembled and the whole forest with everything in it prayed."

Jacob Baltzan wrote profoundly moving passages about the beauty surrounding him. In the end, the man who had only come to Canada to "sojourn" for a year, changed his mind.

"Many a time I observed how at sundown the dew rose from the low places and the sloughs.

First a silvery white barely notice-

cont'd

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Time to Renew



Your Membership!

Your Jewish Historical Society is a non-profit community organization dedicated to the preservation of the history of the Jews in Calgary and Southern Alberta.

Your membership and/or donations help us in collecting and researching the history of the Jewish people, individuals and organizations, with particular emphasis on the collection of oral history from our elders.

It allows us as well to undertake and encourage public information programs, including publications such as Discovery, displays, lectures, and special events.

— see reverse for membership renewal form.

Please check:
☐ Individual \$10 ☐ Family \$15
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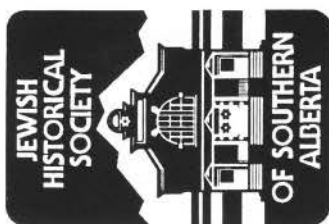
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■ Mark in your calendar the following meetings:

Wednesday, April 24

Brief meeting followed by a tour of the Heritage Room and Library at the Beth Tzedec Synagogue led by Trudy Cowan.

7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue

■ Information is needed

Doug Cass of the Glenbow Archives is looking for information on the following organizations:

Calgary Association of Jewish Immigrants from Russia, 1980 - 87

Sunday, June 2

A bus tour of Jewish Calgary. Visit historical sites and the old Jewish cemetery. Register at the Calgary Jewish Centre by May 15, 1991.

Cost: \$7.50 per person.

For more information please call Riki Heilik at 253-8600.

Calgary Jewish Welfare Fund, 1947 - 61

Calgary Kosher Meat Association, 1921 - 50

Please contact Doug Cass at the Museum if you have information on these organizations.

■ Oral History

Workshops

Trudy Cowan will be giving another Oral History Workshop on Sunday, April 21.

The schedule will be as follows:

10 - 12 noon - will deal with theory
 1 - 3 p.m. - will focus on actual recording techniques.

The workshop will be free for members and will cost \$5.00 for nonmembers. Meet at the Calgary Jewish Centre.

Memoirs cont'd from pg. 6

able something spread from the ground and slowly seeped higher and higher, but very slowly. I'd sit for hours looking at the silvery white matter which grew slowly and I'd ponder it. I was reminded of the "manna" which is explained in the verse, "And when the layer of dew was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness (prairie) a fine, scale-like thing, fine as the hoar frost on the ground". So I'd sit and ponder and never tire of fantasizing till my brother would poke me,

"What? Again lost in thought?"...

I reached the height of ecstasy. No loneliness was evoked, rather my heart was filled with joy, with mystery and it felt good to be alive. Something magnanimous was in G-d's wonderful creation. The vastness, filled with so many wonders, so many mysteries, and I, the city Jew who never had the opportunity to see for myself nature in the raw, was sitting alone on the prairie and my eyes were beholding such beautiful pictures during the days filled with heavy, invigorating work as well as during the quiet nights filled with sorcery.

In this manner I'd sit a long time and never get enough of the beautiful, rich, G-d—given nature."

For a long time, Jacob Baltzan struggled with his decision. To stay or go back home? His wife joined him and their touching chronicles continue as new challenges confronted them every step of the way.

Ultimately the Baltzans left Lipton and over time made their way to Edmonton where Jacob Baltzan and his family became pillars of the Edmonton Jewish Community.

Jacob Baltzan died in 1939. He did not live to know that in the year 1941, the Baltzan family home in Leova, along with the entire Jewish population of the town, was destroyed.

"Our House in Leova" and "Memoirs of a Jewish Western Pioneer" have been made available to the archives of the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, courtesy of Ida Batzan Horwitz and these excerpts are reprinted with her kind permission. There is a translated copy in the Calgary Jewish Centre Archives, and readers are invited to enjoy the full memoirs. The original document was written in Yiddish. ♦

The Origins of the Old Cemetery

by Jay Joffe

If the old synagogue was the heart of the original Jewish Community then the old cemetery was and is its soul. For it is in this very special place that we say goodbye.

Today the old cemetery is the one place, more than any other, that rekindles a flood of memories. For many Calgary Jews, all of our past is here: grandparents, parents, family and friends. Here rest our pioneers, those who took the great leap from Europe to the new world, and the many stories that record their history. One story has special historic significance to us all.

When the ten-month-old Jewish baby, Goldie Bell, died on September 3, 1904, at Calgary, there was no synagogue, no Chevra Kadisha and of course no Jewish Cemetery. In fact the cemetery was started because of her death.

One can only surmise the many difficulties the family encountered in making the arrangements for the first Jewish funeral. We don't know all the details but we do know that somehow, quite quickly, a location for the cemetery was decided on. The small but beautiful first headstone poignantly reads:

Goldie Bell
Born December 9, 1903
Died September 3, 1904
Our Darling

The following month, on October 20, the following entry appears in the City Council records:

Calgary, October 20, 1904
To the Mayor and Aldermen
Gentlemen:

Your Committee on Parks and Cemeteries beg to report as follows: on the application of Messrs. Diamond & Bell for a portion of the Cemetery to be used as a Hebrew burying ground.

We went to the Cemetery and met Messrs. Diamond and Bell on Friday last. The piece of land they want is at the extreme west side of the Cemetery, next to the quarter section line as shown on the attached plan.

We would recommend that this land be sold to Messrs. Diamond & Bell to be used as a Hebrew burying ground and that the price of said land be \$160.00

Respectfully submitted
(Signed) J. H. Kerr, Chairman



This headstone marks the first interment in our old cemetery. It dates to 1904 and its location marks the origins of the first very small site purchased for use as a Jewish cemetery.

Moved by Ald. Kerr,
Seconded by Ald. Hornby and carried.

The Union Cemetery Records from that time record the following payments from the Hebrew Community of Calgary:

December 1, 1904 - Paid Union \$60.00
November 28, 1905 - Paid union \$50.00
September 27, 1907 - Paid Union \$50.00

You'll find Goldie's stone in the north east corner of the cemetery. Perhaps the next time you visit the cemetery, walk to this section and when you locate her stone, imagine if you can, the size of the original cemetery which measured only 93.1 ft. long by 26 ft. wide. A very small lot indeed.

In fact, at the time this property was purchased from the City, it was at the far north west end of the Union Cemetery lands. It was then and is today, separated from the Union Cemetery by a well-travelled road. In 1904 the road was called Victoria Road because it passed in front of Victoria Park, now the Stampede Grounds. Today Victoria Road has become part of the Macleod Trail.

In those pioneer years, the parks and cemetery department continued to record all the Jewish deaths in their register on a separate page titled "Jewish Plot". These records were kept up to 1914, which interestingly is the date the Chevra Kadisha was officially incorporated.

A few years later, on December 29, 1909, the following entry appears in

the City records:

Finance report
Gentlemen
Your Finance committee begs to report as follows:

We recommend that a transfer do issue to the Congregation of the House of Jacob of land sold and set apart by the City in Union Cemetery to be held in trust as a burial place for all of the Jewish persuasion of Calgary.

In Calgary, the Jewish population grew from Jacob Diamond's family in 1901 (7 people) to four families in 1904, to twelve families in 1907. By 1911 there were 75 families; 613 people. It was this small, quickly growing community which established the first Synagogue, The House of Jacob, in 1908.

Not a great deal is known about the Bell family of 1904. Nathan Bell, the father of the child, is listed in the Henderson's Directory of the time as the manager of the Alberta Cigar Co. Ltd. The old cemetery has been added to many times, at considerable cost to the community. The four Jewish families living in the city at that time had no way of knowing of the sudden influx of Jewish immigrants that would take place in the next few years.

A special thanks to Doug Cass of the Glenbow Archives, Sandra Kimele of the City of Calgary Archives and to Mr. Julius Bleviss of the Chevra Kaddish for their assistance in researching this article.

(The historical society would be interested to know if anyone has any further information on the Bells). ♦

Rumsey Reminiscences

by Therese Nagler

Allan "Curly" Gurevitch fondly remembers his family's role in the settlement of the West. His father, Raphael, and an Uncle, Louis Gurevitch, left Czarist Russia in 1902. On board ship, headed to Canada, they heard that farmland was available to homesteaders in the western provinces. Their money ran out in Sault Ste. Marie and, after teaming up with Elias Sengaus, these hearty young men worked as laborers on such projects as the Welland Canal. A disastrous fire left them destitute, so the three new Canadians boarded a C.P.R. train for Calgary.

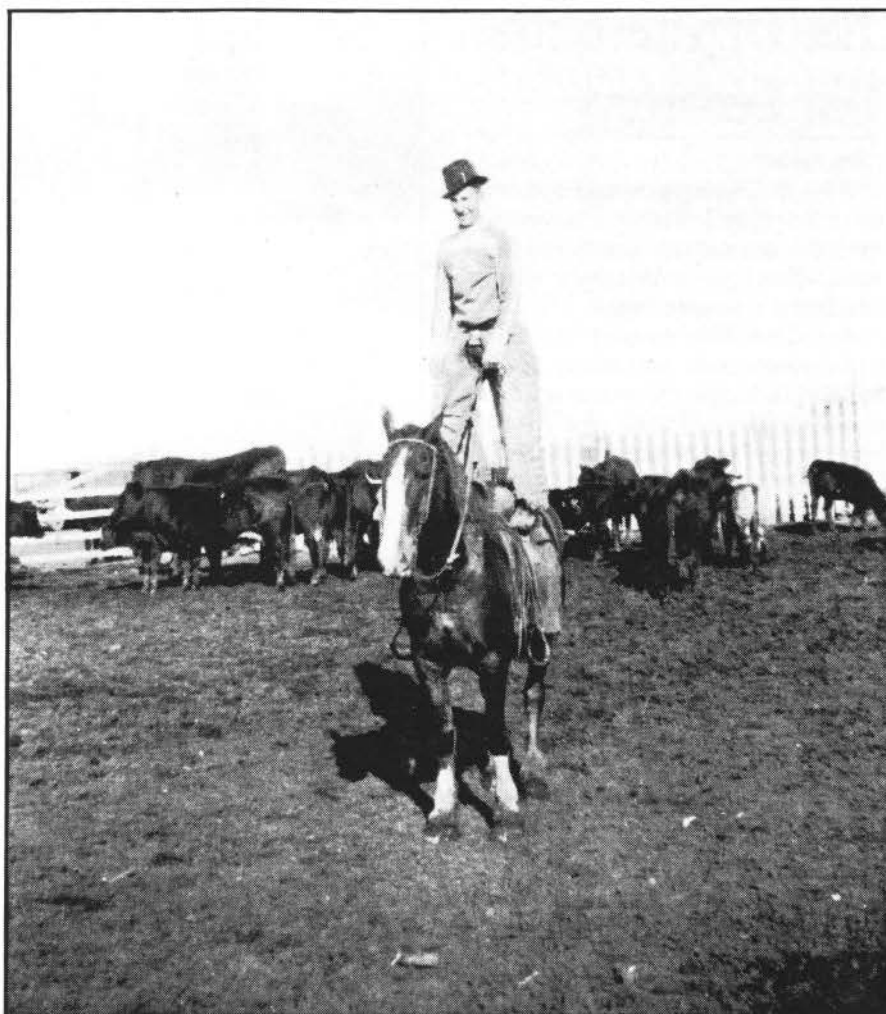
After two years in town, during which time the Gurevitches established a confectionery next to the Hudson Bay store, the land beckoned. In 1905, they filed for homesteads in the area then known as Tolman. Sengaus also filed and became a neighbor.

"Four days of travel by horse and wagon, over bald-headed and short-grass hardpan land, brought them into a parkland where grass was up to a horse's belly. Lakes and sloughs were fresh and productive with wildlife and game. Wild flowers were everywhere and it appeared as if another world had opened its doors. This was the place: Township 33, Range 21, W-4, the Tolman Post Office, along the east banks of the Red Deer river.

"Returning to Calgary, they spread the word among the Jewish newcomers, and almost overnight a Jewish settlement formed on its own. In all, approximately seventy-five men filed, and began their pioneering careers with Townships 32, 33, 34 and Ranges 20, 21 and 22. No one had previous experience in farming and ranching, except here was a chance to own land, that Jews were deprived of in most European countries... Here was a common denominator, here almost everyone was equal, especially when it came to the elements. All had to endure the cold, heat, drought, prairie fires, hailstorms and various deprivations."

The first winter was incredibly cold. The brothers and neighbor Sengaus spent that bitter season living in a sod shack on Raphael's property.

The remaining Gurevitch family all immigrated to Canada in 1907, and the father, Abraham, filed S.W. 20—33—21 W-4; Son Ben filed N.W.



Would you believe Curly Gurevitch, tall in the saddle.

20—33—21 W-4. In 1911, when the railroad came through, the village incorporated and became Rumsey.

Raphael Gurevitch was not tall, but heavy-set with fair complexion and a red handle-bar moustache. He was assertive and resolute—never afraid to stand up to his rights as a citizen and community member. He acted as school trustee, Alberta Wheat Pool organizer and a very active member of United Farmers of Alberta.

In 1912 a cousin and prospective bride, Sophie Lieberman, arrived in Canada and, after mutual compatibility was recognized, the couple married. They lived in Calgary until improvements were made on the homestead, and moved to Rumsey in 1914, along with two baby daughters, Rhoda and Molly. Sons, "Curly" and Sol, were born in 1916 and 1918 respectively, and daughter Frances in 1923. An addition of two rooms was made to the house. The children recall the little structure lovingly! "It

still stands and could tell many stories of happiness and heartache." They have nostalgic memories of the school house at Tolman, winter travel with a team and sleigh complete with bells, back roads from Morrin to Rumsey after a spring rain, train whistles heard on a frosty night, and the warmth of home. Neighbors like the Silbersteins, Raskins, Wolfsons and Sengaus brothers contributed to a vibrant community spirit.

Raphael Gurevitch died while visiting Calgary in 1927. The family remained on the farm until 1930 when they moved back to the city.

"Curly" and his wife, Betty, are well-known residents of Calgary, as is sister Rhoda Barron. Sol lives in Vancouver, Molly in Minneapolis and Frances and her husband, Saul Bondaroff, reside in Montreal. Further information on Rumsey and other early Jewish settlements can be found in the files of the Calgary Jewish Historical Society. ♦