



JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

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Calgary's Jews Star as Symphonic Conductors, Musicians, Patrons, Teachers

Jewish stars shone brightly in the Calgary musical skies during the 1930's. The city's classical orchestras were conducted by Jews. Jewish men and women played in their orchestras, helped raise their funds, and attended their concerts in surprising numbers.

The city's arts scene was further enhanced by the work of Jewish music teachers, who introduced a new generation of children of all faiths to the world of classical music.

Here is a brief look at Jews in music in Calgary.

The Maestros - Garbovitsky and Galperin

Grigory Garbovitsky was born in 1892 in a Crimean village of Kreave, to Hirsh and Nechama Garbovitsky. His father, a salt refining engineer, was also a scholar who translated Russian and Hebrew works into Yiddish.

The future conductor began playing the piano, without lessons, at the age of seven. Formal musical studies, on the violin, soon began locally, and he was enrolled at age 16 at the Conservatory of Music in St. Petersburg.

Jascha Heifetz, a younger prodigy, was a classmate. Heifetz' teacher, Leopold Auer, put Garbovitzky under his (Auer's) prestigious tutelage. He studied composition with Alexander Glazunov.

A young Canadian violinist, Kathleen Parlow, was another of Auer's students. The first foreign student at the Conservatory, Parlow was from the remote Canadian city of Calgary. She and Garbovitsky became friends.

Young Garbovitsky stayed at the St. Petersburg conservatory until 1913,



Minnie Dworkin Stein (1904 - 1981) as a teen-aged musician, c. 1919. She married Jack Stein at 17, and later played in the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Jack Stein also played the violin.

photo - Goldie Barsky

when he could no longer put off army service. He trained military musicians and played his violin on command at the parties of senior officers.

His army unit disbanded during the 1917 Russian Revolution, and he worked with an orchestra in the small city of Ekaterinislav. He conducted in Rostov and finally left the political and

military turmoil of Russia in 1922, when he joined his sister in Berlin.

He twice conducted the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, but found it difficult to make a living as a musician in inflation-ravaged post-war Germany.

A relative in Canada urged him to come to Winnipeg. He arrived there in 1925, and found employment leading the orchestra in a theater, where musicians accompanied the vaudeville acts and the silent movies. He also found the time to be a guest conductor for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

The call to Calgary came in 1927. Garbovitsky was invited by J.B. Barron to lead the musicians at the Palace Theater.

There was no orchestra in Calgary for him to conduct, so he started one himself, reviving the dormant Calgary Symphony. There was no shortage of able musicians or willing volunteers.

A new friend, music patron Luba Shumiatcher, was able to get Garbovitsky involved in several facets of Jewish life in Calgary, notably the Jewish Literary Club and the Calgary Jewish Choral Society.

Garbovitsky also conducted for the Calgary Ladies' String Orchestra, most of whose financial support came from a dedicated group of Jewish women.

In 1940, Garbovitsky moved to Vancouver, where he continued to teach and conduct, appearing with several orchestras. He died in New York in October, 1954.

Concert-master of the new Calgary Symphony Orchestra was Jascha Galperin. Like Garbovitsky he was a Russian-born Jew, and co-incidentally had come first to Winnipeg and then to Calgary as a theater musician.

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Connie Kline: 65 Years Teaching Music in Calgary

Constance Kline is a musical phenomenon.

Kline has been teaching piano in Calgary for over 65 years.

That's 65 years as a professional. She has been giving piano lessons even longer, since 1926, when she was 16.

She's now 85, and still teaches.

She is one of Calgary's foremost music teachers.

Connie Kline was born in December, 1909, in London, England, to Mark and Matilda (Tillie) Lawrence, both members of large Jewish families with Polish origins.

The Lawrence family came to Calgary in 1914, when Connie was 4 years old, on the advice of friends who had earlier emigrated. Her sister Jean was born in 1918. Her father ran a clothing store on 9th Avenue West, and later had a confectionery called "The Sugar Bowl."

Her mother, she recalls, was a gregarious woman, very active in Jewish clubs, notably the Ladies' Aid Society, an immigrant-aid group. Her father had less community involvement.

Kline attended Victoria School, near their row house on 3rd Street East. She began piano lessons at the age of 9, from Mother Agatha at the Sacred Heart Convent. She advanced quickly, topping all students in a nation-wide competition at 12, in 1920.

After studying in Los Angeles for a summer, she joined the classes of Calgary's best-known piano teacher, Gladys Egbert (who also taught Minuetta Shumiatcher.) Kline skipped grades at school, attending Central Collegiate Institute at 14.

Her post-festival public performances began at 16, at Al Azhar Temple concerts, and as part of a two-piano duo at the Palliser Hotel. Kline says she decided very early not to pursue a performance career, realizing at 16, when she completed her first music diploma, that her niche lay in teaching.

Her first teaching was done as a favor to Gladys Egbert, who sent her at 16 to give lessons to two "horrible" boys at a Mount Royal mansion that, she recalls, had its own pipe organ.

Life for a teen-age Jewish wunderkind in Calgary was not all music practice, she says. She skated in the winter, and spent Saturdays at the YWCA, on 12th Avenue, where she enjoyed the gym and pool.

Connie and her mother attended a great many concerts. She recalls that Calgarians were able to hear many musical greats. She heard Rachmaninoff, Heifetz, and other masters at the Palace and Grand theaters.



Connie Kline and student, c.1980

She credits theater owner J.B. (Jacob Bell) Barron, and his musical wife, Amelia Helman, for bringing in world-class musicians who might otherwise have overlooked what was a small prairie city of perhaps 80,000.

In 1929 Kline started full-time teaching. One of her first assignments was a weekly trip to the nearby town of Beiseker, where local Jewish merchant Sam Datner asked her to give lessons.

She took a train early in the morning, rode with Datner to her first lesson, then walked around town from student to student, earning \$1.25 for each half-hour lesson. She was able to be home the same day.

In 1936, she married Isadore Kline, who along with his father, Abush Kline, and brother-in-law Morris Manolson, ran a cattle business, with feed lots in various parts of Southern Alberta.

Connie and Isadore Kline raised two children. Motherhood and music lessons kept her busy during Morris' frequent business trips. Kline continued her own music studies, taking many "master" classes with famous musicians in New York and other centres.

She also studied Yiddish, taking informal lessons from Peretz school teacher Ben Zaretsky. Her family spoke no Yiddish, she says, but many of her Calgary friends did, and she wanted to become more familiar with Yiddish culture. Izzy Kline was a Hebraist, and their children attended the Talmud Torah.

Both children studied music, with Adrienne taking lessons from her mother ("Oh mother, you're nice to everyone but me,") and Steven playing the clarinet. Isadore Kline died in 1957, at 52.

Connie has been involved with all aspects of classical music in Calgary, including active participation in the Women's Musical Club, where she served on the Board for many years.

Connie adjudicated at music festivals throughout western Canada for nearly twenty years.

She has taught many hundreds of children (and adults) over the years. Although none has gone on to huge musical renown, she is very satisfied with her role in their lives. Connie says she is extremely happy to see so many of her former students at the city's concerts.

"They still love music. That's my reward."

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Jews in Classical Music - the Players, the Patrons

In the 1920's the Calgary Jewish community was largely poor, parochial, and traditional. Most of the city's 1500 Jews were immigrants, spoke little English, and gave their available time and charity to Jewish causes.

But the 1930's saw notable movement by Jews into the mainstream of Calgary's business, cultural, and social spheres. This progression can be seen in part by examining their growing involvement with classical music.

Certainly the presence of two Jewish maestros - Grigory Garbovitsky and Jascha Galperin - brought some Jews into the classic music fold.

A growing number of prosperous Jews (and many not-so-prosperous families) were more secular, more "cultured" and more at ease in the English-speaking world than other Calgary Jews. They easily accepted music as part of their Jewish, and later as part of their overall cultural milieu.

Calgary's Jews were, by 1930, beginning to assimilate in larger numbers into the larger community, as business persons, as professionals, and in other ways. Music - as either performer or patron - was one way to expand one's social circle and scope of citizenship.

Additionally there was the personal influence of some socially-prominent Jewish women, primarily members of the extensive Shumiatcher/Smith family. They were among the first Calgary Jewish arts patrons, and encouraged other Jewish men and women to view music as a suitable and prestigious activity.

Jewish musical activity prior to Garbovitsky's revival of the Calgary Symphony was largely limited to ethnic concerts. Instrumental music tended to be violin or piano; choral pieces and songs in Yiddish were the musical mainstays.

Garbovitsky helped organize the Calgary Ladies' String Orchestra. Half the 1932 "patronesses" were Jewish; in keeping with the manners of the time, the programs listed women by their marital status. They were Mrs.

A.I. Shumiatcher, (who was also orchestra librarian,) Mrs. A.H. Goldberg, Mrs. Morris Groberman, Mrs. L. Paperny, Mrs. M. Shapiro, Mrs. J. Joffe, and Mrs. A. Busheikin.

Four of these women were closely related. Paperny, Shapiro, and Busheikin were sisters; Shumiatcher was married to one of their brothers.


The Ladies' String Orchestra had three Jewish musicians in 1932 - Rebecca Wex, Mrs. M. Goldstein, and Mrs. M. Stein. Garbovitsky conducted; their November, 1932 concert was held at the Palliser Hotel.

—FIRST—
GRAND CONCERT

of the

Calgary Jewish Choral Society

PROFESSOR GRIGORI GARBOVITSKY
Conductor



AL AZHAR TEMPLE
Wednesday, June 17th, 1931 8:30 p.m.

- Glenbow Archives

Another of Garbovitsky's musical involvements, the Calgary Jewish Choral Society, featured the Calgary Ladies' String Orchestra at its first concert, held June 17, 1931, at the Al Azhar temple on 17th Avenue West.

The Jewish Ladies' Choir sang three songs, all Yiddish, and the larger Calgary Jewish Choir, which included men, presented five more Yiddish pieces.

The vocal soloists were Mrs. C. Switzer, Miss N. Gamril, and Mr. L. Levey. Instrumental soloists were both Jewish and non-Jewish. There seems to have been considerable co-operation between the Jewish performers and their gentile friends.

Many Jewish children were by now taking music lessons, some at the

music conservatory of Mount Royal College, then located at 7th Avenue and 11th Street West. Their "Junior Symphony Orchestra" was conducted by Jascha Halperin.

A 1941 program notes Juliet Paperny, Judah Busheikin, and Maurice Paperny playing for Galperin. (All were cousins; another cousin, Judah Smith, had joined the orchestra by the 1943 concert season.)

An undated news item indicates a two-piano duo, Sarah Pearlman, and Clara Smith, were to be featured with the Calgary Junior Symphony in a Grand Theater concert to be broadcast on the CBC radio network. Sarah Pearlman also played for the Calgary Women's Musical Club at the Palliser Hotel.

Pianist Edythe Pearlman often played with the Choral Society, and later conducted the NCJW "Council Choir." Her daughter Eta Kerr was Council Choir accompanist.

The 70-member Calgary Symphony Orchestra had a Jewish conductor, Grigory Garbovitsky, and several Jewish musicians. Mrs. M. Goldstein, Ben Maerov and Morris Maerov played first violin, as of course, did concert-master Jascha Galperin. M. Fradkin, Lionel Goodman and Mrs. M. Stein played second violins.

A close look at the orchestra's non-musical hierarchy shows Jews were largely relegated to sub-committee and fund-raising work.

A March 25, 1938 symphony concert program shows no Jews among the officers, directors or patrons of the orchestra. Two Jewish women, Mrs. A.I. Shumiatcher and Mrs. E. Kredentser, are listed as members of the Women's Symphony Auxiliary.

There were a number of Jewish donors listed on the program. They included the Paperny family, Miss M.E. Malkin, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Shapiro, Mr. S. Jaffe, Mr. and Mrs. A.I. Shumiatcher, Mr. and Mrs. I. Kline, Mr. A.H. Goldberg, and Mr. A. Busheikin.

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The First Lady of Jewish Music – Mrs. A.I. Shumiatcher

Her name appears again and again in the archival material of over three decades of Jewish music in Calgary.

And not just Jewish music. As other articles in this issue make apparent, Luba Shumiatcher was a formidable force in the overall cultural life of the city. And her musical daughter, Minuetta, went on from Calgary to international fame.

Her husband, Abraham Isaac Shumiatcher, had come to Canada in 1911 at the age of 20 with his mother, Hesia, seven brothers and three sisters. They had been preceded by the family head, Judah Shumiatcher, and a younger brother, Morris, who homesteaded briefly near Rumsey before moving to Calgary.

Abraham soon persuaded his childhood sweetheart Luba Lubinsky, then 21, to come to Calgary. Born in 1890 into the wealthy family of Nathan and Feiga Lubinsky, Luba was one of the first women to graduate from the Faculty of Arts of Warsaw University.

Morris Shumiatcher, the son of Luba and Abraham, tells this part of her story:

"Her parents were aghast at the thought that their beautiful, accomplished daughter should even consider leaving her home and settle in a remote and savage land. But she paid little heed to her parents' objections.

"They warned her that Canada was wild and sparsely settled, and that it was no place for a young and gentle lady who had won honors and had distinguished herself at school in Petrograd and later, in Warsaw.

"In a long correspondence that my sister and I were to pore over years later, my father held out to Luba the blandishments of a university, a symphony orchestra, and a rich cultural life in Calgary. And so, she came with my father's cousin, Esther Sholomenko (later Bock) who was to be her chaperone and for the rest of my mother's life, her closest friend.

"Abraham and Luba were married in Calgary in 1912.

"The university he promised turned out to be the public library on 13th Avenue West. And the symphony orchestra that he had praised so highly in his letters, was the Calgary Firemen's band that played on sunny Sunday afternoons on the lawn of St. George's Island."

Luba was slow to accept all the comforts of her new home. She became pregnant, but refused to allow the baby to be born in Calgary, saying she preferred the care of European doctors. Their daughter was born in Gomel, Russia, in September, 1914, days after the outbreak of the Great War, but both returned safely to Canada in 1917.

So certain was Luba that their daughter would be a musician that the baby was named Minuetta, after the popular musical form.

Abraham labored through the war years and the 20's as a Hebrew teacher, a CPR land inspector, and a student-at-laws. Luba made sure, meanwhile, that Minuetta and her younger brother Morris grew up surrounded by music and books.

Luba played piano, as did her sister-in-law Bella, and many others among their growing clan of Shumiatcher/Smith in-laws and cousins..

The late 1920's saw Grigory Garbovitsky, like Luba and Abraham, a Russian-educated intellectual and Jewish, start up the Calgary Symphony Orchestra. Abraham qualified as a lawyer in 1930 and began to prosper.

Minuetta played on. She performed her own compositions in public at five. Her father gushed over her in a press release he later prepared for the Jewish Post, stating:

"This little girl gives every promise of a brilliant future, not only as a per-



Minuetta Shumiatcher

former, but as a composer, who, like Mozart, has begun at the age of five to write music which future generations of child-musicians may one day play at similar recitals."

Shortly after her seventeenth birthday, in 1930, Minuetta began her professional studies at the prestigious Institute of Musical Art of the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. She had a scholarship, a suite at a women's hotel, and a Steinway grand piano.

Minuetta returned to Calgary in 1934 for a recital with the Calgary Women's Musical Club. She continued post-graduate studies at Juilliard and taught there for several years, going onto to considerable fame as a teacher, performer, and composer.

She appeared professionally in Calgary several times, performing her Alberta Concerto in 1975 with the Calgary Symphony. Married to Michael Kessler, Minuetta was last in Calgary in 1989, and now lives in the Boston area.

Morris Shumiatcher was less musically-involved than his sister, but did try his hand at song-writing. The

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Shumiatcher papers in the Glenbow archives contain the copyright for "the unpublished musical work entitled 'Join your Country', by Morris Shumiatcher and Minuetta Shumiatcher."

Morris, who later became a prominent law professor, does not recall the words or tune of the song, but says it was part of the war-time patriotism his family encouraged.

Abraham's sister, Bella Abbey, also graduated from Juilliard, in 1934, and later opened the Shumiatcher School of Music in New York City. Another Shumiatcher sister, Sarah Wiener, was a violinist, as was Fanny Ziskin, who played with the Calgary Symphony before she moved to New York.

Luba and Abraham Shumiatcher stayed in Calgary, devoting their considerable talents to the city's cultural life, and "shlepping naches" from the accomplishments of their children..

Other articles in this issue also show Luba Shumiatcher's deep attachment to the arts and her dedication to bringing great music to all the people of Calgary.

Luba Shumiatcher died in Calgary in 1974, at 84 years of age. Her headstone reads, in part, "If I keep a green bough in my heart the singing bird will come."
-by Jack Switzer

For the record - Chasa and Judah Shumiatcher had eleven children. In order of birth, they were: Abraham Shumiatcher; Eva Busheikin; Morris Smith, (Smithbilt Hats); Ethyl (Esther) Hirschbein; Harry Smith; Sarah Weiner; Annie Paperny Green; Fanny Ziskin; Billy Smith; Bella Abbey; and Bessie Shapiro. Morris Shumiatcher, who supplied much of the information for this article, now lives in Regina.



David Austin, c. 1912, with violin he was given by visiting concert violinist Mischa Elman in 1909. David (1895 - 1962) was the son of Chana and Jacob Austin (formerly Gershon Arenstein) who came to Calgary with six children in 1906.

David's brother Morris Austin and his sisters Rose (Waterhouse) And Sophie (Lipitz) also played violin. His sister, Ann (Litchinsky,) was a pianist, while Joseph Austin played the banjo. (Morris' son, raised in Calgary, is Senator Jack Austin, of Vancouver.)

(photo courtesy of Zelda Hanson, daughter of David and Mary Freedman Austin)

welcome donations to help support this important project. A few photo sections are still open for sponsorship.

JHSSA News

Land of Promise Book In Preparation - Family Histories Wanted

The book version of the popular JHSSA photo exhibit Land of Promise is now being prepared for publication later in 1995. The book will contain many of the photos from the exhibit, as well as new material.

Also included in the book will be a section of Jewish pioneer family histories. These will be brief outlines of family genealogy and landmarks, usually one page or less in length.

If you or members of your family were in Southern Alberta before 1945 we want your story. Please send your brief family histories to us.

As well, we would

DISCOVERY

Editors Jack Switzer, 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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Calgary Jewish Choral Society – June 17, 1931

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Mr. N. Levey

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Mrs. J. Stein
Mrs. H. Isenstein
Mrs. D. Switzer
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Mrs. B. Pearlman
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Mrs. L. Novikoff
Miss M. Aizenman
Miss S. Isenstein
Miss F. Sheinin
Miss F. Switzer
Miss G. Davies
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Mrs. L. Pearlman
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A. Dworkin
M. Levinson
H.J. Clarke
A.C. Newcombe

S. Shulman
Z. Zisblat
L. Novikoff
M. Roden

-Glenbow Archives

New Books at JHSSA -

Compiled by Agi Romer-Segal

- The Harry B. Cohen Genealogical Library has growing steadily. Following is a selected list of recent acquisitions:
- Evyatar Friesel, *The Atlas of Modern Jewish History*, Oxford U. Press, 1990.
- Rabbi Shmuel Gorr, *Jewish Personal Names*, Avotaynu Inc.: 1992.
- Chester G. Cohen, *Shtetl Finder*, Heritage Books, 1989.
- Paul Robert Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*, U. of Washington Press, 1993.
- Arthur Kurzweil and Miriam Weiner, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy*, Vol. I, Sources in the U.S. and Canada, Jason Aronson, 1991.
- Simon Belkin, *Through Narrow Gates*, Eagle Publishing, 1966: Studies immigration, settlement, and colonization in Canada from 1840 to 1940.
- Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews, a Social and Economic Study of Jews in Canada in the 1930's*, McGill-Queen's U. Press, 1993: a reprint of a classic demographic study of Canadian Jews prior to 1931.
- Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto, a History to 1937*, McClelland and Stewart, 1979.
- Paloma Piaz-Mas, *Sephardim, the Jews from Spain*, U. of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Wilma Abeles Iggers, ed., *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, Wayne State U. Press, 1992.

- Monica Richarz, ed., *Jewish Life in Germany; Memoirs from Three Centuries*, Indiana U. Press, 1991.
- Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland, a Documentary History*, Hippocrene Books, 1993.
- Steven J. Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa, a Cultural History, 1794 - 1881*, Stanford University Press.

Videos - on VHS

- The Voice of Yiddish Calgary*, 1994, Volumes, I, II, III
- A Time to Gather Stones Together*, Genealogists visit Jewish sites and archival sources in Poland and Ukraine.
- Montreal Jewish Memoirs*, Stories of the twenties and thirties.
- More than Gold; Outposts of Civilization to Cornerstones of Community*, the development of B.C.'s Jewish community, by the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia.

JHS members may borrow most non-archival books from the Society office, every Wednesday from 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Maestros from page 1

Galperin had played the violin in the Budapest Symphony, as well as in Germany, but knew little about the new land. He once said he believed that "Canada" was a city in the United States.

Jascha Galperin was leader of a smaller group, the Mount Royal College Junior Symphony Orchestra. He also conducted the "Baby Symphony Orchestra," made up of children enrolled at the MRC Conservatory of Music, where he taught and was later director.

Galperin conducted the Mount Royal College orchestras until he moved to Vancouver in 1945. He died in Spokane in 1991. -by Jack Switzer

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Individual: \$12, Family: \$18,
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Benefactor: \$100

Constance Kline from page 2

(Connie's sister, Jean Tabachnik, also lives in Calgary. Adrienne Young lives in Toronto, while Stephen Kline is in West Vancouver.)

Connie Kline was interviewed by Trudy Cowan in 1989 for the JHSSA Oral History project.

JHS Tribute Cards

Beautiful museum-photo tribute cards displaying five scenes from this area's Jewish history are available to honor special occasions. Minimum donation (tax deductible) to have a JHS card sent out is \$5.00.

Please call Tiby Presma at 281-3910 to have your card sent out.

Aaron Sapiro - the Pied Piper of Farm Marketing comes to Alberta

The big news in Alberta the summer of 1923 did not concern war, royalty, or crime. It was the year Alberta farmers took control of wheat marketing, the province's biggest industry, and much of the credit has been given to an American Jew, Aaron Sapiro.

Sapiro was a labour union and farm co-op organizer who barnstormed through Western Canada in 1923 and provided the impetus for the rapid formation of the Alberta and Saskatchewan Wheat Pools.

He was brought here at the expense of the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal newspapers. The wartime Federal wheat board had been shut down. Grain prices had dropped nearly a third in 1921, and the governments were perceived as slow to respond to farm problems.

Farm leader Henry Wise Wood of the United Farmers of Alberta had set the stage for farmer-run pools, but the movement was stalled. The big Alberta newspapers brought in Aaron Sapiro to kick-start the movement.

Born in Oakland in 1884, Aaron Sapiro was raised in extreme poverty, spending several years in an orphanage. He went on, though, to graduate from university and enrolled as a Rabbinic student at the Hebrew Union College, a Reform seminary in Cincinnati. He dropped out of the Rabbinic program and studied law instead, beginning a labor law practice in San Francisco in 1913.

He quickly gained a reputation for championing farmer-owned marketing co-operatives, organizing poultry, berry, and pear growers on the West Coast. Sapiro then travelled throughout the U.S.A., helping to start co-ops for wheat, tobacco and cotton growers.

Sapiro was largely responsible for the standard Co-operative Marketing Act in effect in over 40 states. He also drafted pioneering Industrial Safety and Workmen's Compensation laws in California.

The call to Alberta came in July 1923. Huge headlines trumpeted the news-

papers' initiative. "Sapiro Coming to Alberta..." "Will Address Meetings in Large Centers and Confer with Wheat Growers - Action Taken Following Inaction of Provincial Government and United Farmers."

Sapiro came to Calgary first and spoke to a large gathering at the Calgary Exhibition's Pavilion building on August 2, 1923. He was introduced by mayor George Webster. Also on the platform was the Premier of Alberta, Herbert Greenfield, as well as other local dignitaries now anxious to jump on the bandwagon.

Aaron Sapiro's speech was printed verbatim, along with other coverage of the event, in a special 4-page section of the Herald. It was an unprecedented act of journalistic homage to a foreign expert.

Sapiro's two hour speech was one of the first in Calgary to be broadcast in full from a "remote" location, by the Herald's radio station, CFAC.

His Jewish status was referred to only once in the thousands of words of reporting. The Herald stated: "Aaron Sapiro made a wonderful impression on his audience. The man is an evangelist, consumed with zeal for the cause he is engaged in. He fires the imagination with the thought of the possibility that might be. He seems to be not only the prophet of a new age, but a prophet who fulfills his own words."

"He opens the door to a new world, and like others of his race who have led great movements, he sees a vision of a newer and better citizenship."

Sapiro appeared as well in Edmonton, Macleod, and Lacombe in Alberta, and at five cities in Saskatchewan. Legislation required that two-thirds of eligible farmers sign up with the new wheat pool, and allied groups, led by Henry Wise Wood, set out quickly to sign up the necessary membership.

The Alberta organizing effort was a success, with the Alberta Wheat pool formed in time to market the 1923 wheat crop. A late start delayed sign-ups in Saskatchewan until the next

crop year. Manitoba soon followed.

While wheat prices did not immediately rise, the percentage of the price returned to the farmers went up considerably. Jewish farmer Nate Horodetzky (see adjoining article) noted that as a Pool member he got \$1.01 of the \$1.03 paid for a bushel of first grade wheat in 1924. In 1920 farmers had netted only 77 cents of the \$1.30 terminal price.

The general quality of rural life also improved in the wake of Sapiro's successful organization strategies, as farmers, uniting for grain marketing, increasingly co-operated, along with their families, in local community development and social activities.

Aaron Sapiro is best known in Jewish circles for his David and Goliath battle with one of America's most notorious bigots. Sapiro took on Henry Ford, billionaire car-maker and the owner of the Dearborn Independent, a blatantly anti-semitic journal.

Sapiro was attacked in 1924 by the paper in a series of articles alleging that he was leading a Jewish conspiracy to take over American agriculture. He sued for one million dollars; a lengthy trial ended in an out-of-court settlement in 1927.

One source says the settlement included only Sapiro's court costs and an apology to the Jewish people, and that both were given. The Dearborn Independent quickly declined after the Sapiro lawsuit, and Henry Ford lost considerable credibility.

Aaron Sapiro returned to Western Canada once more on business in the 1920's, and was honored at a Saskatoon tribute in 1951. By that time he was suffering from severe arthritis, and had largely retired as a farm commodity marketing expert.

Sapiro died in California in 1959, at the age of 75. Calgary columnist John Schmidt eulogized him by noting that "Farmers' morale everywhere could stand to be boosted today by another Aaron Sapiro. It is hoped this generation will produce another of his stature."

-by Jack Switzer

The Horodetzky's Hear Aaron Sapiro

In 1973 Helen Goldenberg wrote a brief history of Nate Horodezky's involvement with the Alberta Wheat Pool. The Horodezky's - Nate, his brother Jack, and their father Louis - homesteaded near Morrin, Alberta, in the Rumsey/Trochu area in 1907.

Here is part of Nate Horodezky's story, as told by Helen Goldenberg.

One evening in 1923 the father and two sons sat outside on the rustic porch steps of their farm home. In silence they surveyed fields of crops almost ready for harvest. The full moon shining on acres of rich wheat was what farmers dream of. Yet rather than a feeling of gratitude, they felt frustrated.

Earlier, during the war years, markets for wheat were easily obtained. Farmers were urged to grow more and more wheat, and they did. The federal government controlled wheat sales. The price of wheat was \$2.63 a bushel in 1919.

The farmer felt secure. He borrowed large sums of money from banks, invested in additional land, bought livestock, and purchased machinery.

In 1920 the government Board ceased operations, and the Winnipeg Grain Exchange commenced operating. Direct sales from farmer to market was no longer possible. There were too many middle-men involved in grain sales. The average price for a bushel of wheat at terminal in 1921 - 22 dropped to \$1.30. The farmer received 77 cents.

By 1923 the farmer was desperate. Why was the return on grain so minimal? The Alberta government investigated the situation over and over, but found no solution.

Then one day soon after, the boys ran to the field their father was working. "Poppa, look - in the Calgary Herald - a man from the United States named Aaron Sapiro is coming to Calgary to help us."

A young dynamic lawyer had successfully urged U.S. growers to form co-operative organizations to market their farm products themselves. His name was Aaron Sapiro.

Mr. Sapiro addressed a gathering of 500 people in the Pavilion at Victoria Park. The majority in attendance were farmers, including the Horodezky brothers and their father. Merchants, lawyers, doctors, men in the grain trade and farm implement dealers were also present.

The Calgary meeting got immediate results. Enthusiasm grew by the minute. Leaders from all walks of life travelled to farm areas explaining the importance of forming a co-operative. Town meetings were held in schools, theaters, and fire halls.

Nate Horodezky and his brother Fred attended their town meeting in Morrin and promised to sign up farmers in their area. They would rise very early every morning to dispense with farm chores. Then off to the neighboring farms. During the rains when the roads were impassible for driving their Model T, they would walk.

To this day Nate recalls the excitement and challenges of discussing the formation of the wheat pool with the farmers. Few farmers refused to sign the contracts. They understood the potential.



Within two weeks, the necessary number of farmers signed contracts, promising to deliver two and a half million acres of wheat to the newly formed organization. On October 19, 1923, the Alberta Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd. - later called the Alberta Wheat Pool - became a reality.

Sixteen Jewish farmers, including the Horodetzky's, were among the original 1923 Wheat Pool members in the Rumsey district. Nate Horodezky's original membership certificate is kept by his daughter, Bertha Gold.

Mr. Horodezky moved to Calgary late in the 1920's, became a merchant, and passed away in 1986.

-Sapiro photo - Glenbow Archives

players from page 3

It should also be noted that the concert venue, the Grand Theater, which still operates on First Street West, was run by a Jewish family, that of J.B. Barron.

Somewhat interesting is that this concert, and many other symphony concerts, took place on a Friday night,

limiting Jewish attendance to those liberal enough to defy the general proscription of Sabbath theater-going.

The low management participation of Jews in the symphony organization does not necessarily point to any anti-semitism by orchestra leaders. Then, as now, voluntary-group leadership positions required many years of ser-

vice, of apprenticeship to the workings of the group.

The orchestra activities noted here show, however, growing Jewish participation, which paralleled the general trend to assimilation of Calgary's Jews into general community and cultural life.

-by Jack Switzer

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