

JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY of Southern Alberta

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1924 Double Drowning Shocks Jewish Community

The double grave site at the old Calgary Jewish Cemetery is easily overlooked—the headstone is eroded and entirely in Hebrew. And it appears to be the burial site of a married couple, since Jewish custom generally reserves the privilege of adjoining graves only to the married.

There is, however, much more to the story. The couple were not married, and in fact barely knew each other. However, they did die together, in tragic circumstances that made headlines in the city's newspapers.

Translated, the headstone reads "September 1, 1924. Michael Brant, Lena Dolgin. He drowned on the same day as the girl after escaping from Russia at the time of the pogrom and the massacres."

The double-drowning hap-

pened at Bowness Park during the Labour Day long weekend of 1924. Max Brant, 23, went to the park with his friend Adolph Weinacht. Brant came from Bessarabia, in southern Russia. He had been in Calgary less than a year, and had no relatives here.

At the park they met a Jewish family, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Roginsky, their 8-year old daughter Ida Roginsky, and Mrs. Roginsky's sister Lena Dolgin, a 21-year old "tailoress" who had emigrated from Russia the previous year. Weinacht had been in Calgary only a few days, but Dolgin and Brant apparently knew each other.

The young people—Brant, Weinacht, and Ida Dolgin—rented a canoe and took Ida Roginsky with them for a boat ride along the park's canals.

Somehow, the canoe tipped, and all four went overboard. The accident happened at a narrow part of the canal, and bystanders jumped to the rescue. A Mr. R.P. Garrett was able to bring Ida to shore, and Adolph Weinacht saved himself by hanging on to the overturned canoe.

Ida Roginsky was revived by artificial respiration, but Dolgin and Brant were dead by the time their bodies were retrieved from the muddy bottom, only seven feet deep at that point.

A coroner's jury ruled the double death accidental, and could not explain why the boat overturned. Brant was recalled, in fact, by the boathouse operator as an experienced oarsman, who had rented from him several times that summer. The rescuers were commended.

The Albertan reported, "Funeral services were conducted at the synagogue on Monday afternoon by Rabbi Smolensky, and a large number of the members of the Jewish Literary Club were present, both the deceased having been very active members of the association.

"They were buried side by side in the Jewish cemetery on Monday evening."

Sources: Glenbow Alberta Library, JHSSA Archives

— by Jack Switzer

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The Polish-Jewish Family Loan Association – 65 Years Young



PJFLA Founders and Charter Members – share certificate photo, 1936. Front row, l to r: Ralph Switzer, Charlie Switzer, Meyer Switzer, Nate Horodezky, Berl Aizenman, Avrum Belzberg, Leo Moro, Percy Fishman. Middle row, l to r: Moishe Aizenman, Alec Belzberg, Philip Switzer, Mendle Switzer, Avrum Switzer, Sam Boyko, Jack Bleviss. Top row, l to r: Mendle Belzberg, Zieshe Zysblat, Mendel Switzer, Jack Fishman, Morris Mendleman. This photo has 21 founders; another share certificate photo shows only 20 men. Only brothers Ralph Switzer and Charlie Switzer survive; Charlie is 99. Photo: JHSSA Archives

The Calgary Polish Jewish Family Loan Association (PJFLA) recently celebrated its 65th anniversary of service to its members and the community. Over 200 persons, many descendants of the founders, celebrated the Association's rich history at a Jewish Center luncheon.

The society, its name changed to The Calgary Jewish Family Loan Association, is still active.

Its beginnings in 1931 are recounted in the adjoining article, as told by founder Nate Horodezky. He recalls how his wife's cousin Jack Bleviss came to his clothing store on 8th Avenue East and told him and his *landsleit* Berl Aizenman how his application for a loan had been rejected by the Allan Free Loan Society because he was a Polish Jew, and should be looked after by his own people. Bank loans were not even an option; poor Jewish peddlers of any background hardly qualified.

Horodezky and Aizenman decided to form their own mutual aid society, organized in 1931 and incorporated in 1932 as the Polish Jewish Family Loan Association. Interest-free loans of up to \$50 were to be paid back, if affordable, at two dollars a week. Dues, share proceeds, and social events capitalized the work.

The charter states: "The object of the Society is solely to aid members who are temporarily embarrassed financially, by loaning small sums to members of the society..."

The by-laws note that those eligible for membership were "persons of the Polish-Jewish race." There was an initiation fee of \$5 and monthly dues of fifty cents, payable in advance.

Five directors signed the charter application—"Baer Aizenman, 334 - 7th Avenue E., Shoemaker; Abraham Belzberg, 410 - 7th Avenue E., Mer-

chant; Nate Horodezky, 129 - 10th Avenue N.E., Merchant; Harry Mittelman, 433 - 15th Avenue E., Shoemaker; and Max Switzer, 1239 - 12th Avenue W., Merchant."

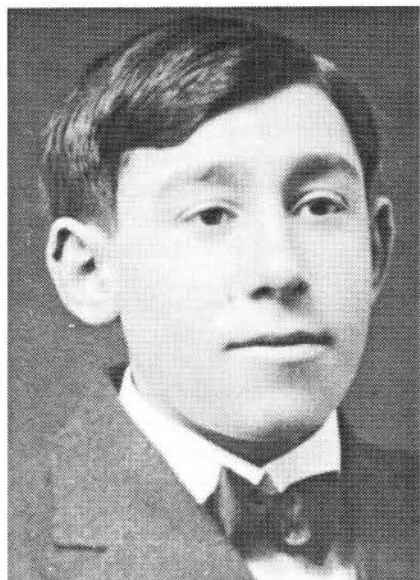
(Lawyer J.F. Scott was careless in his spelling of the immigrants' names: Baer Aizenman was Berl Aizenman, Harry Mittelman was Harry Mittleman, and Max Switzer was Meyer Switzer.)

The PJFLA has been a combination of two important Jewish institutions, the Free Loan Society, and the *Landsmanschaften*, an association of compatriots—Jews from the same European town or region. The PJFLA founders were not only Polish-Jewish immigrants, but most had roots in or near the city of Radom, and many were related.

Historian Harry Gutnik says that 1926 Winnipeg had 32 such self-help groups, including *landsmanschaften*,

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The Polish Loan Society – A Founder Remembers



Nate Horodezky, as a teen, circa 1915.
Photo: Bertha Gold

Nate Horodezky (1900–1986) tells of how the PJFLA was started at Princess Clothing on 8th Avenue East in 1930:

"After I established the clothing business, I think I was two years in the business, and a fellow by the name of Berl Aizenman came to Calgary, he was a shoemaker. He came from Poland and he was looking for a place where he could establish a shoemaking business.

"I had a pretty good-sized store and I said, 'Well Berl, if you like, I'll rent you part of it. You can have the window. A shoemaker does not require too much room. I can use the back for clothing, and you use the window.' That is exactly what he did and he paid me rent. He was very pleased and he was doing very good and he was with me for several years.

"We were very good friends and during the summer of 1930 Jack Bleviss came to see us in the store. He told us that at the time we had in Calgary what they called the Allan Free Loan, that the people, when they needed some money could come and get a loan for \$50, at Miller's.

"He needed some money very bad and he came and he asked them for a loan. He said, 'I need \$50.' They said, 'What, a Polisher, you want \$50? You've got a rich aunt, Mrs. Singer. She's got lots of money. Why don't you ask her for money?' Mr. Bleviss said, 'What can I do, I just left and that's all.'

"So I started talking with Berl Aizenman. Look, I says. It doesn't sound very good. It should not be any different if you are a Polish Jew or if you're a Russian Jew or an English Jew. A Jew is a Jew regardless of what country he comes from. There should be no distinction. I say Mr. Bleviss is entitled to a loan the same as everybody else.

"I think it would be a good idea to form our own organization, and of course, if they're going to make a distinction between a Russian Jew or an English Jew, we'll call it the Polish Jewish Loan Society.

"What do you think?' I asked Berl. 'This is very good. I like the idea,' he says. 'I'll tell you what, Berl, you be the president, I'll be the secretary and we will form a committee and we will get started. We will put in a few dollars together, as much as each of us can put in the kitty, and we will do the lending according to how much we can afford.'

"He says, 'It's a good idea. Let's get started.' So we got organized, we got about ten people to start it, who were willing to put in \$50 apiece. This made \$500, and we thought we could lend out to at least ten people to give them help. So we decided how the money should be paid back, like two dollars a week and as soon as he pays it out he can get another loan.

"We had to get a charter to form an official organization, so I went up to my lawyer, Scott Owen, a wonderful man. I asked him what it will cost. If I remember correctly I think it cost us \$25 for the charter, imagine that.

"So we went to work and formed our committee. I think Berl Aizenman was the president, I was the secretary-treasurer, and Myer Switzer was one of the first directors. Also Charlie Switzer and Ralph Switzer, all brothers. (Nate's wife Lily Switzer Horodezky was their sister.) Who else? There was Jack Bleviss. No, not the Singers. Let me check the picture we took.

"I was secretary-treasurer for seven years, and then Shaike Shlafmitz took over the job. I retired—I think I did my share. Shaike Shlafmitz did it for five or six years.

"Oh yes, it's still going strong today.

The other loan society, the Allan Loan, disappeared. I really don't know



Berl (Ben) Aizenman, circa 1930. Photo: Jack Switzer

where they went, they just disappeared. They used to lend out money and they had a lot of trouble collecting, a lot of people didn't pay.

"We had no trouble because our constitution was firm. We said a man is not entitled to another loan until the first is paid. He has to pay two dollars a week; of course if they could not afford it, we waited an extra week or two, whatever the case might be, as long as he kept it alive.

"To begin with we used to charge three dollars a year for dues and we used to raise money by way of entertainment. We would make teas or dances or banquets, whatever we thought of. We would raise \$200 or \$300 through the year and that's how it was. Later on we also issued shares—after ten years you could get a certain amount of money back, but later on they decided not to do that."

Source: 1975 audio-tape interview, JHSSA Archives

Our First Jewish Pharmacist – the John Weinfield Story



John Weinfield, Calgary, circa 1940.
Photo: Stanley Winfield

John Joshua Weinfield was born in Zbarash, Austria, in 1879, and came to Montreal with his parents in 1886. He was the eldest of eight children born to Israel and Esther Weinfield.

John Weinfield became, in 1903, the first Jew to graduate from the Montreal College of Pharmacy, and Montreal's first Jewish druggist.

It is not known with whom he served his apprenticeship, but he opened his first drug store in 1905 at the corner of Bleury and Dorchester Streets. Three years later he opened a second pharmacy at 458 St. Lawrence Boulevard.

John Weinfield and his younger brother Henry Weinfield (later a prominent Montreal lawyer) were very much involved in Jewish cultural activities. The Weinfield brothers were co-founders of the Maimonides Literary Circle, whose membership of young Jewish men held formal debates, dis-

cussed the classics, and sponsored musical evenings. John Weinfield also began what ultimately became a valuable collection of first editions, rare coins, and *objets d'art*.

In 1911 John Weinfield, then 32, married Sophie Sereth, daughter of wealthy Calgary lumberman Henry N. Sereth, founder and president of the Riverside Lumber Company. The wedding took place in the Sereth's Calgary home, but the couple moved to Montreal. Sophia was very unhappy in Montreal; Weinfield was persuaded by his father-in-law to sell his two flourishing drug stores and in 1913 the Weinfields—John, Sophie and infant son Jack—left Montreal and moved west to Calgary.

They took up residence in a new house at 3028 - 2nd Street S.W., in Roxboro, then a new subdivision being developed by H.N. Sereth. It was to be their home for the next thirty-three years. Three more sons—Stanley, Irwin, and Joseph—were born and raised there. John Weinfield was appointed managing director of the Western Cooperage Company, a Riverside Lumber subsidiary.

Three years in the barrel business was enough for Weinfield. In 1916 he returned to the pharmacy profession, as a dispenser at Perry Drugs, 139 - 8th Avenue West. He was admitted to membership in the Alberta Pharmaceutical Association in 1917 and opened a drug store at 238 - 8th Avenue West.

Weinfield endured a major blow in 1919. The Alberta Liquor Act—prohibition—had been enacted in 1915. Most alcoholic beverage sales were banned, but doctors and dentists were authorized to prescribe liquor for "medicinal purposes," with pharmacists required to keep records of such "bona fide" prescriptions and sales. In February, 1919, Weinfield was charged and convicted for selling liquor on what was clearly found not to be a "bona fide" prescription. The minimum fine of \$100 was imposed.

It was well known in the pharmaceutical and medical communities, and to the authorities, that many druggists in Alberta were dispensing liquor "for medicinal purposes" in similar fashion.

Some were so cavalier as to not even bother recording their sales; others sold liquor by the glass in the back of the store.

Rightly or wrongly, John Weinfield believed that pressure was exerted on the police to prosecute, and felt he was "set up" because he was Jewish and considered expendable. The conviction wounded him deeply, and he never came to terms with either the charge or the judgment.

Despite this setback, his pharmaceutical career went on. In 1921 he repeated his Montreal success story by opening a second store across from the Palliser Hotel at 134 - 9th Avenue West. He closed the 8th Avenue store in 1924 and in 1924 opened and closed Albion Drugs at 2508 - 4th Street West, in the Mission district.

He also established a firm called Drug Craft Laboratories, which held patent rights for the various pharmaceutical products he devised and marketed over the years.

Between 1925 and 1928 Weinfield was to open, and close, two more drug stores, one in Canmore and one at 713 Centre Street South, where he was once beaten, tied up, and robbed at gunpoint.

The years between 1928 and his move to Vancouver in 1944 were difficult ones for Weinfield. He had a young and growing family to provide for, and the Depression made continuing as a drug store owner, at least for him, impossible. After closing the Centre Street store he found temporary employment with druggist friends, including Neil McDermid and Bob Duff. Between 1929 and 1934 he was a travelling salesman for tobacco company Benson & Hedges.

He returned to the drug business in 1934 by opening Holland Herbal Dispensary, a "specialist in herbal remedial teas," upstairs in the Maclean Building at 109 - 8th Avenue East. This venture was not a success, and in 1936 Weinfield was appointed "Inspector of Pharmacies" for the provincial government. This involved travelling to various "relief" camps throughout the province to inspect their dispensary facilities.

His family's personal fortune greatly declined during the Depression years. Piece by piece, many of their treasured possessions, including his

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NOW-A-DAYS

—People have come to realize that good gums and teeth are not only an asset to good health but beautify one's facial expression. Use—

R_x

FOR
PYORRHEA

Iosol
SOLUTION

It is without a doubt the most wonderful mouth wash ever offered to the public.

PRICE 50c PER BOTTLE.

Get it from the

John J. Weinfield
Drug Co., Ltd.
OPPOSITE PALLISER HOTEL.

A 1917 ad for Iosol; name, logo and formula patented by John Weinfield. Source: Glenbow Alberta Archives

John Weinfield ...

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fine personal library and art collection, were sold. In 1938 the Roxboro home was lost to foreclosure.

John Weinfield was a deeply religious man, and said his Jewish faith helped keep him going, particularly during the war years, when he worried not only about his three sons serving overseas in the Canadian Armed Forces, but also about his many relatives still in eastern Europe.

In 1944 John and Sophie Weinfield moved to Vancouver, where he was immediately employed as a pharmacist at a downtown Cunningham Drugs branch. The next year the B.C. Pharmaceutical Association invoked new examination requirements for out-of-province graduates. Botany, never before studied by Weinfield, was on the curriculum. At age 67 he enrolled in classes at the University of British Columbia, and on his second attempt passed the course.

On November 10, 1947, John Weinfield was "duly registered as a Pharmaceutical Chemist" in British Columbia. He actively practiced his profession in various Vancouver drug

stores until 1959, when he retired at age eighty.

Following Sophie Weinfield's death in 1971, John Weinfield moved into a retirement home. On his one hundredth birthday in 1979 he was made an honorary member of the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia and was recognized by McGill University as its oldest living graduate.

John Joshua Weinfield passed away peacefully on March 15th, 1985, in Vancouver, at the age of one hundred and six.

— By Stanley Winfield, Vancouver. (Mr. Winfield, son of J.J. Weinfield, is former president of the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia. His reference sources include *The Weinfield Papers at the Montreal Jewish Public Library*, and *The History of Pharmacy in Alberta*, by Ken Penley, and *The Sereth Story*, by Stella Sereth Sameth. The Glenbow Alberta Archives and the



For Mrs. Alf. Lewers

R

Listerine

H₂O₂

aa 3iii

Sig Gargle every
3 hours

W. H. W. 12573
1.00

Mr. J. W.

A 1920 prescription. Source: Glenbow Alberta Archives

JHSSA Archives have some of John Weinfield's pharmaceutical documents.)

Polish-Jewish Family Loan Assoc. ... con't. from page 2

such as The Propoisker Society, Free Loan Societies like The Hebrew Sick Benefit Association. Toronto, according to Gerald Tulchinsky, had 30 "mutual benefit societies" in 1925, including fraternal lodges and leftist worker clubs like the *Arbeiter Ring*—Workmen's Circle, ranging in size from 80 to 500 members.

Gutkin says the Societies are based partially in the Talmudic principle of *gemilut chasidim*—acts of loving kindness. "A loan was not to be considered charity, and therefore damaging to the recipient's self respect, but simply a temporary support, perhaps even an obligation upon the group as a whole."

In major Canadian Jewish centers some free loan societies and *landsman-shaften* owned buildings, operated their own cemeteries and a few evolved into synagogues. Their major functions, adopted by the Calgary Soci-

ety, were both economic and social—to greet newcomers from "home"—*landsleit*, to assist members in need, to aid townsmen left in Europe, and to provide friendship and warmth in a sometimes hostile new land.

As post-Depression economic conditions improved and its members became established in the community, the society's small-loan function waned, but its social activities continued. The Polish Jewish Family Loan Association was briefly inactive during the 1970's, but was revived, with a new, more-inclusive name, by the founders' sons and daughters, anxious to continue its traditions of charity and friendship.

Sources: Bertha Gold, Annie Brodsky, JHSSA Archives; Jewish Free Press; Harry Gutkin, *Journey into our Heritage*; Gerald Tulchinsky, *Taking Root*.

— by Jack Switzer

Sophie Weinfield Chooses Calgary

Adapted from *The Sereth Story*, by Stella Sereth Sameth, 1973.

Sophie, the oldest of the five Sereth sisters, was sixteen when our family arrived in Calgary from Zbarash, Austria, in 1905. She had a varied education, was an insatiable reader, and she imagined herself to be a sophisticated young woman.

Back in Austria, she had been sent to Vienna to live with her uncle Ignatz Kleiner, where she was to study to become a kindergarten teacher. There, she learned German and some English. She recalled a momentous event when she went with the Kleiner family to the opening of a new bridge, in Budapest, the construction of which her uncle Ignatz had supervised, and saw him presented with a medal by Emperor Franz Joseph.

Her father (Henry Noah Sereth) established a thriving lumber business in Calgary and sent for his family in 1905. Sophie and sister Cecyle were both enrolled in St. Hilda's School for Girls. Calgary had few eligible young men, but father's cousin Esther Zwiebel Weinfield, also from Zbarash, lived in Montreal, and she had sons. So mother took Sophie on a trip to Montreal, and she met the oldest Weinfield son, John.

A match was made. The couple became engaged in 1911. The parents on both sides were delighted with the prospects of a marriage between Sophie and John. Sophie was bright and attractive and her father was a rich man.

John Weinfield, Montreal's first Jewish pharmacist, was already the owner of two successful drug stores, and was highly respected by both French-Canadians and the very "waspish" English business and social community.

John and Sophie were married in the Sereth home in Calgary on August 15, 1911. Henry Goldberg was John's



Sophie Sereth (l), age 17, and her sister Cecyle, age 15, in Calgary, 1909. Both were then students at St. Hilda's Ladies College. Photo: Stanley Winfield.

best man. The Bell family and the Allens, both our neighbors, attended. (The Bells, from Toronto, ran a chain of Calgary-based theaters, and Cecyle Sereth married Harry Allen in 1914.)

John and Sophie returned to Montreal to set up their home, and Jack, the first grandson of H.N. and Rachel Sereth, was born there in October, 1912.

Sophie was unhappy in Montreal. She could not adjust to John's large family and she found her mother-in-law's strict orthodox regimen particularly demanding. Father persuaded John Weinfield to sell his drug stores, move to Calgary, and join him in the lumber business.

In 1913 the Weinfield family moved to Calgary, and set up their home at 3028 - 2nd Street South West, where they were to live for the next thirty-three years. Their other sons, Irwin (1917), Joseph (1919) and Stanley (1923) were all born in Calgary. All four boys celebrated their bar mitzvah

in the synagogue on 5th Avenue East of which John was a founder and an early president.

The Depression struck John's business as it did many others, and after facing and overcoming many hardships, John and Sophie Weinfield moved to Vancouver in 1944. By then Jack was in the lumber business on the west coast, and the three younger boys were serving in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Irwin was in both the Merchant Navy and Army. Joe served in all three branches—he was discharged from the RCAF early in the war for health reasons, sailed with the Merchant Navy, and then joined the Army, landing at Normandy with an artillery regiment and fighting throughout northwest Europe.

Stanley was in the RCAF in Canada, England, and Europe, and has written about his involvement in the disarmament of the Luftwaffe and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Jack, Irwin and Joe all went into the lumber business, and were successful. Stanley is a retired lawyer in Vancouver.

Jack Weinfield married Eleanor Ellis, a Montreal fashion designer. Irwin married Caroline Sichel, the daughter of a prominent Portland family. Joe married the former June Rose of Edmonton, and Stanley married Odile Bidan, who had come to Vancouver from France as a university exchange student.

Sophie was a romantic until her dying day. She had a marvelous sense of humor. Her reading was her escape. Her European scholarship had included teachings of the Torah. She could not accept John's orthodox religious views, but instead steeped herself in the study of cabala and astrology.

Sophie Sereth Weinfield died in 1971 after a lengthy illness during which time John never left her side.

Calgary – A Mecca for Israeli Leaders?

It was five years ago this month that Calgary received its only visit from a former prime minister of Israel.

Yitzhak Rabin, at that time Israel's newly-installed Labour party leader, addressed the Rotary Club annual dinner in Calgary on March 16, 1992. Rabin had resigned as prime minister fifteen years earlier, but was re-elected to the job three months after his Calgary appearance.

He also gave a press conference for local media, bringing the message that "Israel and its Arab enemies are closer to peace now than in decades."

Rabin's Calgary visit might have been the only one from a former Israeli prime minister, but was hardly the first from a future one.

In 1972, when Rabin was Israeli Ambassador to Washington, Likud leader Menachem Begin stopped in Calgary and met with local Jewish leaders. He attended services in what was then the Shaarey Tzadec Synagogue. Begin became prime minister five years after his Calgary visit.

Decades before Begin and Rabin arrived, Calgary was a whistle stop on the 1936 North American fundraising tour of Histadrut activist Goldie Myerson—the future Golda Meir, prime minister from 1969 to 1974.

ARRIVING TODAY 820 PM CPR, read a wire received in Calgary on March 25, 1936. The future Israeli leader spoke at the new, unfinished Jewish community centre at 18th Avenue and Centre Street S.E. Organizers hoped a large attendance would yield funds and memberships for the Jewish labour federation, but it was later conceded that her Calgary meeting was "not well attended."

Local media took interest in Mrs. Myerson's talk. According to the *Albertan*, forerunner to the *Calgary Sun*, "The oft-times tragic plight of Jews today in many countries of the world is only too evident to this distinguished woman. While she would much prefer to remain at her post in Palestine helping immigrants to find their place in that land, she readily accepts the more difficult and more essential task of making the work of Labor Zionism known to Jews on this continent."

The local Pioneer Women's Association

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GOLDIE MYERSON

One of the most outstanding Leaders of Zionism.



Official Representative
of the
'HISTADRUTH'

(Palestine Federation)
of Labor

Dear Friend:

In this momentous epoch in the history of our people when open and brutal persecution is seeking to exterminate a large portion of our people ERETZ-ISRAEL stands out as the sole place of refuge for the hundreds of thousands of tormented and homeless Jews.

Can Eretz-Israel absorb the hundreds of thousands of Jews seeking a home?

Who Is The Constructive Element in Zionism?

These and many other vital questions will be answered by

GOLDIE MYERSON

OFFICIAL DELEGATE OF THE "HISTADRUTH" IN PALESTINE

at a

MASS MEETING

on

SUNDAY, MARCH 29th, at 8:30 p.m. sharp, in the
TALMUD TORAH HALL

Madam Goldie Myerson, who resides in Eretz-Israel, is well known to Edmonton Jewry, as an outstanding orator in Yiddish and English and is exceedingly well informed on the situation of Jewry of Europe and our unprecedented accomplishments in Eretz-Israel during the past several years.

In this very significant hour in the history of our people it is the duty of every member of our community and district to avail himself of this rare opportunity to hear our most vital problems discussed by such a distinguished guest as Goldie Myerson.

Respectfully,

Joint Committee of Farband, B'nai Zion, Hadassah
Pioneer Women, Junior Hadassah and Young Judea.

Histadruth Poster, 1936. The visit of Goldie Myerson (Golda Meir) to Western Canada is advertised in this Edmonton poster. A similar gathering was held in Calgary. Material: Marie Samuels

Yes, I would like to join the Jewish Historical Society

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JHSSA News

Land of Promise Still Available

Over 600 copies of our photo history *Land of Promise* have been sold. The book is still available, at the publication cost of \$50, plus \$5 for mailing, if necessary. *Land of Promise* can be purchased at the front desk of the Calgary Jewish Centre, or through Mel Nagler, at (403) 255-4192. The book is also on sale in Vancouver, at the Jewish Centre office of the B.C. Jewish Historical Society.

Discovery Pages Adding Up

This is the 18th issue of *Discovery* since its inception in the Fall of 1990. These issues comprise 126 pages of photos and text. We hope some time in the next year to publish all our past issues in a binder format.

Welcome to Edmonton JHS Journal

The first edition of "Heritage - Yerusha," the journal of the Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta, has been published. The Edmonton society was formed in 1996, and is seeking both support and historical materials. For information, write Uri

Rosenzweig, at the Edmonton Jewish Community Centre, 7200 - 156 Street, Edmonton, T5R 1X3.

Oral History Transcribers Needed

We need volunteers with typing skills and good ears to listen to oral history audio tapes and type them into transcript form. Contact our oral history chairperson, Bertha Gold, at 243-0633, if you can help. Also, we have Yiddish newspaper clippings that require translation into English. Call our office to volunteer.

JHSSA Cards, Books

Our members and friends are reminded of our beautiful historic photo cards, which can be sent in your name to honor any special occasion. Minimum donation (tax deductible) to have a card sent out is \$5. Please call Tiby Presma at 281-3910.

Larger gifts can be directed to book purchases. A donation of \$36 or more will allow us to add new books to the Harry B. Cohen Genealogical Library and dedicate them according to your wishes. Again, call Tiby Presma for information.

Calgary - A Mecca ...

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tion hosted a tea for Mrs. Myerson the following day. She later departed for Edmonton, where she addressed a mass meeting in that city's Talmud Torah Hall.

Was Calgary visited by Israel's founding prime minister, David Ben-Gurion? A summary of community activities from the Jewish year 5698 (1937-38) suggests he did; it refers to a visit by "Mr. Ben Gurion of Palestine." Disappointingly, a survey of biographical literature on David Ben-Gurion shows no trip to Calgary, Alberta.

If he didn't come to Calgary, Ben-Gurion was in good company. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, Israel's first president, also didn't come to Calgary. Weizmann was expected to spend several days here in June, 1921. Community leaders asked the School Board to give Jewish children a day off in his honour. The mayor and other dignitaries were to greet Weizmann at the train station, and he was to be feted at a civic reception and a Canadian Club luncheon. Civic officials even planned to fly the Zionist flag over City Hall on the day of Weizmann's arrival.

"For the first time in the history of the city," the *Albertan* wrote on June 1, 1921, "the Zionist flag will flutter from the flagpole of the city hall on Friday. Many citizens, we venture to say, are not aware that there is a Zionist flag. But there is, and it is a very attractive flag, too, though simple of design. Watch the city hall flagpole on Friday."

Unfortunately, Weizmann's itinerary had to be changed at the last minute, and the Calgary portion of his trip was cancelled.

Whether or not the Star of David flew over City Hall remains a mystery.

- by Harry M. Sanders

DISCOVERY

Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta

President: **Jay Joffe**
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Financial Secretary: **Mel Polsky**
Treasurer: **Henry Gutman**
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