

JHSSA DESCRIPTIVE LEVEL RECORD

TITLE: Lethbridge Jewish Community fonds

No.: LJC

DATE RANGE: 1941-1973, 1985-2001, 2016

EXTENT: 37cm of textual records. – 5 objects. –1 DVD.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The first permanent Jewish residents in Lethbridge were the family of Harris Goodman, who arrived in 1905. They were soon joined by the Moscovich and Feinstein families, and religious services began being held in family homes. In 1909, land was purchased from the City of Lethbridge to establish a cemetery, following the death of Louis Loewenthal. In 1911, the Lethbridge Hebrew Congregation was incorporated with 19 male members, including Louis Bikman [Bickman], Louis Keel, Morris Fefferman, Hyman Feinstein (President), Harry Glassman (Secretary-Treasurer), Harris Goodman, Pincus Haller, Yoel Klinger, Barnet Moscovich, Israel Moscovich, Morris Moscovich, Isaac Pincus, Max Sadowski, Michael Sadowski, Samuel Sadowski, William Sadowski (Vice President), Louis Stine, Abram Strulovich and Abraham Wyman.

By 1921, Lethbridge had become the Jewish centre for over 100 individuals in town, as well as another 50 in neighbouring towns and rural areas, including Magrath, Pincher Creek, Blairmore and Milk River. The community was served by a series of religious leaders, including Rabbis Goodman, Levine, Yampolsky, Zusman, Shuster and Kozasky, none of whom stayed more than a couple of years. In between times, both spiritual and educational services, in the form of children's after-school instruction, were provided either by lay leaders, or by Rabbi Smolensky, of Calgary. A Ladies Chevra Kadisha (burial society) was established in 1928, by Sarah Fefferman, Leah Bikman, Rebecca Green, Chava Cooper, Bessie Corenblum and Sara Goodman.

In 1935, after over 20 years of holding religious services in rented facilities, the community purchased its first synagogue, a former church, that was dedicated as Beth-Israel. By the mid-1950s that space had been outgrown, and Rabbi Morris Susman, who would become the community's longest-serving clergy, helped launch a campaign for the construction of a new Beth-Israel building, which was dedicated in 1956. Not long after this, the community reached its peak at just under 80 families, with almost 60 students enrolled in the Hebrew school.

The population of Lethbridge Jewish community held steady for many years, but began to dwindle in the 1970s. By the early 2010s there were only a handful of families still connected to the Beth-Israel, and the synagogue building was put up for sale. The remaining members of B'nai Brith continued to hold an annual dinner through 2018, with funds supporting local arts festivals, and providing trade and high school scholarships.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The fonds consists of organizational newsletters, minutes, financial information and scrapbooks relating to the activities of the Lethbridge Jewish Community, including a cemetery map/plan for the Lethbridge Hebrew Cemetery and a DVD of National Council of Jewish Women Lethbridge Section fundraising parties, 1963-1966. Also included are handwritten historical notes written by Mickey Davids (no date), and histories of the community written by Jack Klinger (1956) and Elmer Goodman (1980).

The fonds has been arranged into the following series: Lethbridge Hebrew Congregation, Lethbridge Hebrew Ladies Aid, National Council of Jewish Women Lethbridge Section, Lillian Freiman Hadassah Chapter, Lethbridge B'nai Brith Lodge #1518, Maurice Cohen Memorial Chapter BBYO, Young Judaea, Lethbridge Hebrew Cemetery; Lethbridge Community Histories.

NOTES:

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of fonds

SOURCE OF ACQUISITION: David Bickman, Ralph Corenblum, Mickey and Hy Davids, B. Ghert, Julius Lister, M. Moscovich, Melissa Singer

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

FINDING AIDS: item lists available, see series

ASSOCIATED MATERIAL: Galt Museum and Archives

ACCRUALS: no further accruals expected

RELATED GROUPS OF RECORDS: JHSSA photo collection, JHSSA cemetery files

GENERAL NOTE: Includes material from the following accessions: 2001-010, 2001-011, 2002-023, 2006-018, 2007-012, 2007-021, 2011-003, 2018-01

Series Title: Lethbridge Hebrew Congregation

No.: .01

Date Range: 1948-1960

Extent: 2cm of textual records

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The Lethbridge Hebrew Congregation was incorporated in October, 1911. The congregation was initially served by a series of spiritual leaders and teachers, whose residence often doubled as classroom and synagogue, though various halls around the city were rented out as needed. In 1935 the congregation purchased and renovated a former Baptist church, which served as synagogue, community hall and Hebrew school for almost 20 years. By 1954 the community had outgrown the facility, which was called Beth-Israel, and land was purchased for a new building which opened in April, 1956.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a register from the Lethbridge Hebrew School, a letter from the Lethbridge Hebrew Ladies Chevra Kadisha regarding the installation of a plaque, the 1958 "Hebrew Congregation of Lethbridge" constitution, and a photo clipping of the kindergarten class, c1960. Also included are a booklet from the dedication of the new Beth-Israel synagogue building, invitations to a 1962 Testimonial Dinner and a 1964 memorial Dedication Ceremony, and one piece of blank letterhead.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

LANGUAGE NOTE: many notes in the register are in Hebrew

CONDITION NOTE: loose pages

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Lethbridge Hebrew Ladies Aid

No.: .02

Date Range: 1946-1952

Extent: 2cm of textual records

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The Lethbridge Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, also referred to as Ladies Aid of Lethbridge, was a charitable organization originally formed in 1923, which raised money through rummage sales, dances and monthly socials. Members of the Society regularly contributed funds to local synagogue and Jewish community projects, as well as broader campaigns such as United Israel Appeal. Hebrew Ladies Aid also supported the work of other charitable organizations like the Old Folks Home, Community Chest, and Orphanage, and contributed to local hospitals and the cancer and heart funds. In 1952 the membership of the Lethbridge Hebrew Ladies Aid Organization decided to cease operations, and re-form as part of National Council of Jewish Women.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a set of loose typed minutes and a coil-bound handwritten minute book, from the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society of Lethbridge. The coil-bound book contains some shorthand minutes that are typed out in the set of loose pages. Some membership information for 1946-1948 is contained at the back of the coil-bound minute book.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: National Council of Jewish Women Lethbridge Section

No.: .03

Date Range: 1952-1969, 1997

Extent: 2cm of textual records. –2 objects. –1 DVD

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Lethbridge Section was established in 1952, with Mrs. E Goodman serving as President. A section of National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, the Lethbridge NCJW honoured the national organization's motto, "Service to Humanity". The group supported a wide range of causes including Red Cross, Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, and care packages to Israel, using money raised through various activities including a card fund, rummage sales and an afternoon bowling league. They also equipped the Lethbridge Beth Israel Community Centre kitchen, awarded a scholarship to a student at the Lethbridge Collegiate Institute, and supported the work of the Mental Health Association through the presentation of staged readings on mental health issues.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of notes from an early organizational meeting outlining the structural expectations of a National Council of Jewish Women section, and the contents of a scrapbook kept from organizational inception through 1970, of clippings, bulletins, histories, invitations and planning notes. Also included are minutes from a 1953 Education Workshop; a report from an unnamed Lethbridge woman who attended the 1953[?] Biennial conference in Toronto; several *Bulletins* from 1953-1958; undated songs and a script entitled *Council Capers*; a felt NCJW badge; a wooden gavel engraved "Lethbridge Section / National Council of Jewish Women of Canada / December 1952"; a 1962 program script called *A Decade of Council*; a DVD of National Council of Jewish Women Lethbridge Section fundraising parties, 1963-1966, "re-mastered from film" at a unknown date.

The scrapbook material has been removed by the archives for preservation; the clippings have been copied and re-located to JHSSA subject files; all other material has been moved to file folders and maintained in chronological order.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

FINDING AIDS: item lists available

Series Title: Lillian Freiman Chapter of Hadassah Lethbridge

No.: .04

Date Range: 1941-1945, 1952-2002

Extent: 23cm of textual records. --3 objects.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

Lillian Freiman Chapter of Hadassah Lethbridge, locally referred to as Hadassah, was organized in 1941 at the home of Mrs. Mary Moscovich. A chapter of Hadassah-WIZO of Canada, a Jewish women's social-activist organization, the group's first president was Mary Cohen, and her executive included Pearl Klinger, Mary Moscovich, Minnie Belzberg, Minnie Shapiro, Eva Davis and Miss Sharna Balcovske. Always a smaller chapter, Lillian Freiman Chapter was nonetheless active in both the Jewish and wider Lethbridge communities. Mary Moscovich went on to serve on both the regional and national levels. Early minutes mention an association with a local Junior Hadassah group.

Lethbridge Hadassah placed a programming emphasis on Zionist education and cultural activities, and hosted a regular study group. Funds were raised through box socials, concerts, teas and bake sales, as well as fashion shows and new and used clothing sales, and supported the parent organization's initiatives, such as the Youth Aliyah and Medical Aid campaigns. The "Hadassim Table Cloth", created in 1955, was embroidered with the names of individuals in whose name a contribution had been made in support of a children's project in Israel. Included among the names is a National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) stamp. Donations were encouraged to commemorate life cycle events, and names were added through the 1970s.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of loose minutes, minute books and membership information; financial statements, reports and records, including a Youth Aliyah (Yizkor) ledger and remittance receipts from Hadassah-WIZO Canada; fashion show programs ('63,'64, '66, '67, '69); Mickey Davids' reports on "United Jewish Appeal and Jewish National Fund" (1952) and "Women in Israel" (undated). Also included are a hand-written chapter history (198-), a hand-embroidered chapter banner for Lillian Freiman Hadassah Chapter, Lethbridge, and the "Hadassim Table Cloth".

The series has been arranged into the following sub-series: Minutes (including chapter history, reports and correspondence); Financial; Membership; Events.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

CONDITION NOTE: loose pages in 1941 minute book

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Lethbridge B'nai Brith Lodge #1518

No.: .05

Date Range: 1953-1961, 1987, 2016

Extent: 1cm of textual records

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

Lethbridge B'nai Brith Lodge #1518 (sometimes spelled B'nai B'rith), commonly referred to as B'nai Brith (BB), was incorporated in 1944. President Jack Klinger and Vice-President Hy Shuler, along with 32 other charter members, were part of North West Canadian Council, District 6, of the Jewish service organization B'nai Brith Canada, in turn part of B'nai B'rith International. The organization's primary focus has always been to strengthen and support the Jewish community, and to combat antisemitism, bigotry and racism.

Lethbridge B'nai Brith activities promoted social engagement as well as social action. Curling was a popular activity, and members regularly attended dinners and musical revues, listened to speakers, and raised funds for the Lodge's many community assistance programs through a range of activities including casino nights, auctions, New Year's Eve dances and the B'nai B'rith Golden Plate Dinner. Lethbridge BB participated in curling bonspiels with local service clubs and other Alberta BB lodges, and helped to support Camp B'nai Brith (later renamed Camp BB-Riback) on Pine Lake in central Alberta. They also hosted children's Chanuka parties, and were active in the establishment of programs and activities for local Jewish youth, including B'nai Brith Youth Organization and Hillel. The annual Golden Plate Dinner was still being held in 2018, with proceeds supporting various local music festivals, and providing scholarships to trade and high schools.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a special front page edition of the Lethbridge Herald from October 7, 1961 that featured Lethbridge B'nai B'rith, as well as 2 newspaper clippings from 1953 and 1987; blank letterhead; four issues of the *B'nai B'rith Bulletin* from November 1955, January 1956, February 1956 and March 1956. The *B'nai B'rith Bulletin* covered the activities of B'nai B'rith, Lillian Freiman Chapter of Hadassah, National Council of Jewish Women Lethbridge Section and the Beth Israel Synagogue. Also included is a copy of the Golden Plate Dinner newsletter, announcing the 2017 event.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Maurice Cohen Memorial Chapter BBYO

No.: .06

Date Range: 1961-1970, 1976

Extent: 5cm of textual records

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The Maurice Cohen Memorial Chapter of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO), also referred to as the Moe Cohen Memorial Chapter, was part of Northwest Canada Region, District Six of BBYO International. Following the model of its international body, Lethbridge BBYO was established as a pluralistic Jewish youth movement and offered programming within distinct areas such as leadership training, social action and Jewish education.

While the structure of BBYO usually saw separate groups for boys (Aleph Zadik Aleph / AZA) and girls (B'nai B'rith Girls / BBG), the Maurice Cohen Memorial Chapter, like BBYO in many smaller communities, was a joint chapter for all area Jewish youth. The small size of the Lethbridge Jewish community also resulted in a close relationship with other community organizations, like B'nai Brith Lodge #1518. In addition to its local programs, Lethbridge BBYO was an active participant in Regional activities, hosting and attending conferences and conventions throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a scrapbook containing correspondence, membership information, clippings, event descriptions and photos regarding the activities of Maurice Cohen Memorial Chapter BBYO, as well as letterhead and a blank "Wake-a-thon" sponsor form.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Young Judaea

No.: .07

Date Range: 1942

Extent: 1cm of textual records

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

The inaugural meeting for Lethbridge Young Judaea, also called Young Judaeans, was held in January 1942. They were part of a network of Canadian Young Judaea groups which first convened as the Young Judaea National League of Canada in 1919, supported by the Canadian Zionist Federation. The first executive of Lethbridge Young Judaea included Miss A. Goldenburg (President), Miss P. Davids (Vice-President), Mr I. Cohen (Secretary), Miss J. Cooper (Corresponding Secretary), Miss H. Davids (Social Chairman), Mr B. Davids (Education Chairman) and Miss A. Cohen (Treasurer).

A Zionist organization with an emphasis on leadership, Lethbridge Young Judaea raised funds through the collection of dues, as well as through raffles, dances and book sales, and their meetings included educational discussions and debates.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of a 1942 minute book for Lethbridge Young Judea.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Lethbridge Hebrew Cemetery

No.: .08

Date Range: 1973

Extent: 1 map

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of an annotated map of the Lethbridge Hebrew Cemetery.

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access

Series Title: Lethbridge Community Histories

No.: .09

Date Range: 1956, 1980

Extent: .5 cm

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The series consists of handwritten historical notes written by Mickey Davids (no date), and histories of the community written by Jack Klinger (1956) and Elmer Goodman (1980).

SOURCE OF TITLE: title from content of series

ACCESS CONDITIONS: no restrictions on access