Birth, marriage, death documents likely available soon

Major archives in U.S. & C.I.S. sign genealogical agreement

The National Archives Volunteer Association (NAVA) and the AROS Society, Ltd. (Archives of Russia) recently signed an agreement creating the Russian-American Genealogical Archival Service (RAGAS). The service will facilitate the handling by archival repositories in the former Soviet Union of inquiries from North Americans who are interested in locating information about their families.

Under the agreement, the American side will accept inquiries concerning genealogical information, distribute a bilingual form for inquiries, and forward completed forms to AROS for fulfillment. AROS will create a computer database of genealogical information from orders received from the American side; translate the requests into Russian, if necessary; analyze the information; and ensure that it is forwarded to the proper archival repository. RAGAS will estimate the cost of the search and return the results to the inquirer via NAVA. RAGAS will operate throughout the Commonwealth of Independent States.

To obtain a copy of a specific document, an inquirer will pay a non-refundable fee in advance of $20 (US), plus a shipping and handling charge of $2. For more detailed genealogical inquiries, AROS will charge $6 an hour for its time; there will be an initial advance fee of $50 for each order. This fee is not refundable if no information can be located; if information is located, the advance will be deducted from the total cost. These temporary charges may be adjusted once RAGAS is in full operation.

The agreement between AROS and the National Archives Volunteer Association is scheduled to undergo a trial period of six months, after which it will be reviewed.

"The deal is a good deal but not a great deal," said Gary Mokotoff, president of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

Mokotoff praised the accord because it puts a ceiling on research costs, but was wary of the non-refundable $20 charge even if a record cannot be found. "This may be a false fear if the vast majority of inquiries yield positive results," he said. "After all, many government agencies in the United States also charge even if records are not found."

Patricia Eames, who co-ordinates the project for the National Archives, was readying the genealogical forms when SHEM TOV called her (202-501-5205) in mid-June. "We have to wait for the Russian side to approve the forms," she said. "In another six weeks, we'll have it all in place."

Forms may be obtained by writing: RAGAS, P.O. Box 236, Glen Echo, MD 20812.

Inside:

3 "A" is for Archives
4 What's doing in Winnipeg
5 Jewish Loyalists in New Brunswick
8 Finding Doctors in the United States
9 Resources in Montreal
SHEM TOV is published quarterly by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada and is distributed free to members. Current and back issues are available for $4 each.

Contributions of articles of interest are invited. Please submit material to Bill Gladstone, 195 Vaughan Rd., Apt. 7, Toronto M6C 2M4, or to our Society's postal box. All contributions are subject to editing and become the property of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada. For subscriptions or changes of address please contact Peter Cullman, P.O. Box 446, Station A, Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5T1.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada was founded in 1985 and has about 140 members. Membership costs $30 per calendar year. Meetings are held September to June, usually on the last Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto. Guests are always welcome. Details are usually announced in the Canadian Jewish News.

The Society is affiliated with the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto and has applied for status as a non-profit charitable organization.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publishers. Views and opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of SHEM TOV or the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada. Copyright 1992 SHEM TOV and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada. ISSN 0843-6924. All rights reserved.

Officers of the Society (June 1992)
President: BILL GLADSTONE
Immediate Past President: DR. ROLF LEDERER
Secretary: SHERYL ERENBerg
Membership Secretary: PETER CULLMAN
Cemetery Committee Chairperson: GERT ROGERS
Treasurer: SID DISENHOUSE
Librarian: KAILA CRAMER
Hon. Life President: RAYZEL ROBINSON-PAULL

SHEM TOV staff
Managing Editor: BILL GLADSTONE
Contributing Editor: HENRY WELLSCH
Production Editor: ROBERT T. LOWY
Consultant: HOWARD SHIDLOWSKY

Contributors to this issue:
BILL GLADSTONE
HOWARD MARKUS
HOWARD SHIDLOWSKY
NEIL B. YETWIN
DR. ROLF LEDERER
PAUL PASCAL
MIRIAM WEINER

NEW MEMBERS
We welcome these new members to our Society:
Gerald P. Barron
Frances Halpern
Harold Nudelman
Susan Rosenberg
Pat Gilbert
Rabbi Charles Lippman
Dr. Larry Gaum
Jerry B. Tepperman
Ernie Levy
Valerie Feuer
Gurion Hyman
Neil Richler
Gary Stein
Dr. Reuven Lexier
Sidney Orpus
Doris Resnik
Allan A. Rutman
Harry Gegen

SEARCH AD
Solomon – Tilly Solomon (my great-great-grandmother) and her sons emigrated to Canada in 1890s; she was born ca. 1826 and died ca. 1940 at age 114. Seeking info and possible descendants of the Solomon family. Lauren Strauss, 25 Beagle Close, Brooklde, Futham, Middlesex TW13 7DJ England. (JU92)

AT OUR MEETINGS

Sunday April 5: Nearly 80 participants (members and non-members) joined us for an afternoon of talks, seminars, demonstrations and discussions at our 2nd Annual Jewish Genealogy Workshop. Topics included How to Get the Most Out of The Mormon Library, Jewish Surnames, Computers and Genealogy, and Holocaust Research. The event featured a large library display, a large map display, group discussions on several birds-of-feather topics, and wonderful refreshments. Joel Drutz won the door prize, a copy of Volume One of the Encyclopedia of Jewish Genealogy.

Wednesday April 29: Henry Abramson covered nearly three centuries of Ukrainian Jewish History in a talk entitled "Jews in the Ukrainian Crucible: Social Upheaval and Demographic Change." Mr. Abramson is writing a PhD dissertation at the U of T on several anti-semitic pogroms in Ukraine in the post-WWII era -- atrocities comparable to the Khmel'nitski massacres of 1648-56, he says, yet largely overlooked in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

Wednesday May 27: Representatives of three Toronto landsmanschaft organizations -- Litiner, Opopow and Ozrower -- described the history and function of their societies. Few records of interest to genealogists have survived in the files of such organizations, according to the trio, who emphasized their central role as burial societies. Coincidentally, all three Polish towns are within 20 km of each other.

Wednesday June 24: Annual general meeting, featuring talks by two members, Alex Korn and Morris Roitman, on their Polish research.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Ongoing throughout the summer: Volunteers will be transcribing tombstones at Roselawn Cemetery until the fall. For information, please call Gert Rogers, 588-2318.

Sunday July 26 to Thursday July 31: Eleventh Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, Vista International Hotel, Manhattan. Five days of workshops, lectures, field trips, socializing and hands-on research. Titled "The New York Jewish Experience," the event will feature programs on the history of Jews in New York City and much else. For information write: Jewish Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 6398, New York NY 10128.

Wednesday September 23: First fall meeting. A Beginner's Workshop (free to members) is planned.

Sunday June 27 to Thursday June 30, 1993: Twelfth Summer Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, Park Plaza Hotel, Toronto. Preparations have begun for this international gathering of Jewish genealogists next summer in Toronto. For information, please call Dr. Rolf Lederer, 663-5195.
"A" Is For Archives

Inside the Jewish Federation Archives

By Howard Markus
(Archives research associate)

Founded in 1973, the Jewish Archives (Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto/Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region) collects and preserves material relating to the Jewish community in Ontario. Its holdings include materials -- minute books, correspondence, financial records, newspapers, books, photographs -- from both individuals and organizations. Although most of its holdings originated with the large Jewish communities in Toronto, Hamilton and London, smaller communities in Guelph, Welland, St. Catharines, Sudbury, Timmins and Thunder Bay are represented as well.

Below is a brief description of materials of interest to genealogists:

(1) Mutual Benefit Societies. -- Many immigrants joined mutual benefit societies, which provided assistance to members who became sick or unemployed. In some societies, members had a common ideology (e.g. Workmen’s Circle); in some societies, members came from the same area of Europe -- “landsmanschaften” (Lodzer MBS); while other societies accepted everyone regardless of ideology or place of origin (Pride of Israel Benefit Society).

The Archives has material from many societies, including the oldest MBS in Toronto, the Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society (est. 1899). The collections include membership lists, application forms, minute books and anniversary books. The Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society collection contains all the minute books (1899-1967), the membership application forms (1907-1918, 1931-1970), membership lists (1918-1935), members’ ledger books (1906-1918, 1938-1964) and anniversary souvenir books (35th in 1934, 50th in 1949, 65th in 1964, 70th in 1970).

(2) Synagogues. -- Many Jewish immigrants to Canada became affiliated with a synagogue. Most of the early synagogues were landsmanschaft synagogues; their members came from the same place in Europe. The Archives has minute books, bulletins, dues books, membership lists and marriage registers from synagogues throughout the province, including the First Narayev Congregation, Toronto (1914-1963), Congregation Agudath Israel Anshei Sfard, Toronto (1914-1978), Beth Isaiah Congregation, Guelph (1931-1972) and Shaarey Shomayim Synagogue, Thunder Bay (1908-1986).

(3) Religious Officials. -- The Archives has the personal papers of rabbis and cantors. Two collections of importance to genealogists are the Rabbi Kirshenbaum collection and the Cantor Wladowsky collection. Rabbi Kirshenbaum was a rabbi in London, Ontario, from the 1920s to the 1970s. This collection contains his funeral eulogies, wedding speeches and sermons.

In addition to being a cantor, Bernhard Wladowsky was also a “mohel.” His record books (1915-1932) list the circumcisions he performed and the weddings at which he officiated, showing names, addresses and fees.

(4) Honour Rolls. -- Some organizations publish books which list individuals who have made donations. The most extensive publication is from the United Jewish Welfare Fund/United Jewish Appeal. Its annual Honour Roll listed donors by name, address and amount pledged. The Archives has Honour Rolls for Toronto from 1938 to 1967 (when publication ceased) as well as for Hamilton for 1954.

(5) Directories. -- Several large Jewish communities in Ontario published directories listing Jewish residents by name, address and occupation. Some directories also have a business section showing Jewish tradesmen, professionals and companies by industry and occupation. The Archives has Toronto directories for 1925, 1926 and 1931, and most of the directories for London between 1947 and 1979.

(6) Education. -- The Archives has material from Jewish schools in Ontario. Some collections include the names of the students, addresses, and sometimes grades and attendance. The Archives has student records for several schools, including the Hamilton Talmud Torah (1959-1965), the Borochov School and Kindergarten, Toronto (1948-1985) and the Midrasha L’Morim, Toronto (1953-1970). The
Archives has recently acquired files of many teachers who taught in the Toronto Jewish schools (1949-1975); they contain teaching records as well as biographical information.

(7) Jewish Immigrant Aid Society. -- Founded by the Canadian Jewish Congress to assist Jews who wished to immigrate to Canada, JIAS helped the sponsor and immigrant to acquire and complete immigration forms. It also provided loans for the voyage to Canada and helped immigrants adjust to life in Canada.

The Archives has the case files of the Toronto office from 1935 to 1950. The files include forms which the sponsor and the immigrant completed as well as correspondence with government agencies.

(8) Cemeteries. -- The Archives has lists of burials at some Jewish cemeteries. Some contain only names of the deceased and row and plot numbers; others also show dates of death. A few provide headstone inscriptions.

(9) Newspapers. -- Numerous Jewish newspapers and magazines have been published in Ontario. The Archives newspaper collection includes the "Yiddisher Zhurnal" (1915-1959), the "Canadian Jewish News" (1960-1992), and the "Jewish Times" (sporadically from 1975-1992) and the "Jewish Standard" (sporadically from 1930-1992).

(10) WWII Refugees. -- In 1940 the British government shipped about two thousand Germans and Austrians who had been living in Britain to Canada. About 75 percent of these were Jewish. The Archives has obtained the case files of the Central Committee for Interned Refugees. The files contain biographical information about the internees.

(11) War Orphans. -- Following WWII, the Canadian Jewish Congress sponsored the immigration of 1,116 Jewish orphans who had survived the Holocaust. The Archives has correspondence files as well as a card index which contains biographical information about the orphans.

(12) Community Organizations. -- Many community organizations (e.g. Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto, Canadian Jewish Congress, Zionist organizations, cultural organizations) have given material to the Archives, including membership lists and in-house publications. The material obtained from the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Jewish Congress includes names of lay members.

The United Jewish Welfare Fund (now the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto) published several newspapers. The Archives has the "UJA Picture News" (1952-1960) and the "Jewish Reporter" (1964-1966). The Meyer Bromberg collection contains membership lists (1947-1970) and bulletins (1933-1985) of the Ajalon Lodge, a Zionist organization.

Anyone wishing to use the Archives should call Dr. Stephen Speisman, (416) 635-2883, ext. 170. The Archives is located in the Lipa Green Building, 4600 Bathurst St., Willowdale, Ontario M2R 3V2.

What's Doing in Winnipeg

Since its formation in 1990 as a division of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, the Winnipeg Jewish Genealogical Institute has been keeping busy.

Meetings of the Institute, held every six weeks, usually attract between 50 and 60 people. Among those who have addressed the group are Lawrence Tapper, an archivist at the National Archives in Ottawa, Dr. Rolf Lederer of our Society, and several members of the Manitoba Genealogical Society.

As well, the group has visited the local Mormon Family History Library and plans a bus tour of old Jewish farm colonies in Manitoba this summer.

Members are in the process of organizing an exhibit on family trees and family history, based on the research of descendants of families who settled in Western Canada at the turn of the century and those whose families came after the Holocaust. In preparation for the exhibit, which is planned for next year, the WGI has prepared a kit on how to prepare a family tree and history. "People who don't really know how to go about it can write in for one," says Harry Gutkin, JHSWC president.

For more information, write to the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, 365 Hargrove St., Suite 404, Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2K3.

SHEM TOV
P.O. Box 446, Station A
Willowdale, Ontario
Canada M2N 5T1.

ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by September 1, 1992, for the Rosh Hashanah issue. Please indicate how many insertions you would like. As the chart indicates, our basic rate is discounted for advertisements placed in four consecutive issues (one year) instead of a single issue only. By placing an ad in SHEM TOV, you are reaching a growing number of readers in Toronto, across Canada and internationally, and helping to support a unique and vital journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONE ISSUE</th>
<th>FOUR ISSUES (Yearly rates)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FULL PAGE</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 x 4 = $200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALF PAGE</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25 x 4 = $100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUARTER PAGE</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15 x 4 = $60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIGHTH PAGE</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8 x 4 = $32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEARCH ADS are also available. Rates are $5 for the first 25 words and 25 cents per word thereafter; your name and address are free. Please write advertisement clearly with family surnames you are researching in UPPER CASE letters. Make cheque payable to Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada and mail to: JGS of Canada, P.O. Box 446, Station A, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2N 5T1.

Jewish Genealogical Institute has been keepiing busy.

Meetings of the Institute, held every six weeks, usually attract between 50 and 60 people. Among those who have addressed the group are Lawrence Tapper, an archivist at the National Archives in Ottawa, Dr. Rolf Lederer of our Society, and several members of the Manitoba Genealogical Society.

As well, the group has visited the local Mormon Family History Library and plans a bus tour of old Jewish farm colonies in Manitoba this summer.

Members are in the process of organizing an exhibit on family trees and family history, based on the research of descendants of families who settled in Western Canada at the turn of the century and those whose families came after the Holocaust. In preparation for the exhibit, which is planned for next year, the WGI has prepared a kit on how to prepare a family tree and history. "People who don't really know how to go about it can write in for one," says Harry Gutkin, JHSWC president.

For more information, write to the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, 365 Hargrove St., Suite 404, Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2K3.

SHEM TOV
P.O. Box 446, Station A
Willowdale, Ontario
Canada M2N 5T1.

ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by September 1, 1992, for the Rosh Hashanah issue. Please indicate how many insertions you would like. As the chart indicates, our basic rate is discounted for advertisements placed in four consecutive issues (one year) instead of a single issue only. By placing an ad in SHEM TOV, you are reaching a growing number of readers in Toronto, across Canada and internationally, and helping to support a unique and vital journal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ONE ISSUE</th>
<th>FOUR ISSUES (Yearly rates)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FULL PAGE</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 x 4 = $200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALF PAGE</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25 x 4 = $100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUARTER PAGE</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15 x 4 = $60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIGHTH PAGE</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8 x 4 = $32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEARCH ADS are also available. Rates are $5 for the first 25 words and 25 cents per word thereafter; your name and address are free. Please write advertisement clearly with family surnames you are researching in UPPER CASE letters. Make cheque payable to Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada and mail to: JGS of Canada, P.O. Box 446, Station A, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2N 5T1.
Strangers In A Strange Land: The Myers Family of New Brunswick

Throughout history, the winds of political circumstance and anti-semitism have blown our Jewish ancestors from country to country. This is a story of a Jewish family in revolution-era America who came to a new land -- Canada -- not for reasons specifically related to their religion but because of their loyalties to the British crown. Rachel Myers and her children were probably not the only American-Jewish loyalists to come to Canada, but their story is probably the best documented so far.

by Neil B. Yetwin

Born in Sopron County, Hungary in 1740, Benjamin Myers was married in 1757 at the age of 17. His Austrian-born wife, Rachel, was just 12. Empress Maria Theresa's anti-Jewish policies convinced the young couple to emigrate to America shortly thereafter. Travelling to Holland, then Harwich, England, they endured a six-week sea voyage that left them on the docks of New York's East River.

Their first child, Benjamin Jr., was born in Yonkers, N.Y., in 1758. In 1761, they moved to Newport, Rhode Island, where a thriving Jewish community was basking in a commercial "golden age." After his dry goods store went bankrupt, Benjamin Myers became sexton of Newport's new synagogue and the community's "shochet" or ritual slaughterer. The Myers continued to have children: Mordecai, their ninth and last, was born May 20, 1776. Later that year, Benjamin Sr. died at age 43.

At 18, Benjamin Jr. was a British loyalist who was forced to flee to New York City after refusing to swear allegiance to the American cause. When British-occupied Newport fell into American hands in 1779, Rachel Myers and her eight other children also went to New York. Staunch loyalists, Benjamin and his brother Abraham joined battalions in 1778 to fight with the British.

Fearing reprisals after the British evacuation from New York in 1783, many loyalists fled. Rachel, Benjamin and Abraham Myers decided to accept the British offer of free land in Nova Scotia. The family boarded a ship, the "Hope", which as part of a 20-vessel fleet landed at the mouth of the Saint John River at Parrtown, later Saint John, on April 27, 1783.

Dismal conditions greeted the refugees. The weather was cold and wet. Shortages of food and water, swarms of insects, poor sanitation, and rising alcoholism, theft and violence wore down their resistance and morale. The following winter, the Myers family along with thousands of others languished in a makeshift city of tents and crude huts.

Early in the summer of 1784, Benjamin and Abraham Myers and 65 others were granted parcels of land at Gagetown. The Myers brothers hurried to develop their allotment of 200 acres astride Coy Lake before another long winter set in. Rachel, meanwhile, petitioned the governor for a choice tract of farmland that had already been cleared. In her correspondence, which she undertook with help since she was illiterate, she described the "Distressed situation of your petitioners," her "fatherless Children" and "her Real Needy Family" who had been living in "very deplorable circumstances" since their arrival.

When after some delay Rachel received a piece of land, she discovered that it was "to Low for Building on." Through the intercession of her son Benjamin in 1786, she received more suitable acreage. By then, however, she had made up her mind to return to New York.

There were several good reasons behind the decision. First, it was clear that the land she and her sons were granted would yield little to sustain them. Second, they were receiving only one-third of the provisions the British had promised. And third, the severe winter of 1786-87 resulted in severe food shortages, which would certainly force them into genuine starvation, as it did for many of those who remained. Another factor may have been that Rachel Myers probably missed the comforting reassurance of a Jewish community such as the 2,500 Jews who were then living in New York. They were just one family among the 15 percent of the New Brunswickers whose roots never took to Canadian soil.

As the only Jews among the mix of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics, Calvinists and Luthers who had settled on the St. John, the Myers had little or no background or experience in either agriculture or woodcraft. Most of the New Brunswick settlers were farmers, carpenters, masons, coopers, shoemakers and the like, with many generations of similar occupations passed on to them from Europe. European Jews had always been barred from owning land or

Author Neil B. Yetwin, a social studies teacher in Schenectady, N.Y., has lectured and written extensively on Major Mordecai Myers, a 19th-century Jewish mayor of Schenectady. He has also gained recognition for his work on methods of teaching the Holocaust in public school.

Shem Tov
guilds, forcing them into occupations like peddling or tailoring, of little use on a developing frontier.

Although by this time in her life a well-traveled woman, Rachel Myers was essentially an urbanite lacking the skills necessary to face the challenges posed by an impenetrable forest. Her illiteracy did not help, either. Each of her petitions is written in a different hand, explaining the inconsistencies in spelling. "Her mark" on several is either a simple "X" or a loop resembling the number "6" in reverse.

Upon their return to New York in July 1787, the Myers lived in a house owned by philanthropist Robert Richard Randall and quickly renewed their ties with Congregation Shearith Israel. In 1788, Rachel ran unsuccessfully against four other candidates for the position of the synagogue's "shammash" or sexton. She also contributed six shillings towards the construction of the temple's new mortuary chapel. Abraham and Mordecai set themselves up as auctioneers at their home at 404 Pearl Street and supported their mother until her death on March 30, 1801. The partly legible stone marking her grave stands to this day.

Rachel Myers lived all of her life in the lowest rungs of American, Jewish and Loyalist societies. But she left behind a remarkable legacy in several of her descendants. In the 1850s her son Mordecai became the mayor of Schenectady, N.Y. and died there in 1871 at age 95. Her daughter, Judith Myers, married Loyalist Alexander Montgomery, was baptized in 1792, and died in Toronto in 1831 at age 62. And the great-great-great-grandson of this unread, would-be Canadian pioneer was American poet Robert Lowell, who won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in the early 1960s.

Ralph Waldo Emerson could have been considering Rachel Myers when he suggested that "there is a relation between the hours of our life and the centuries of time." For Rachel represented two distinct currents of the historical experience: the dispersion of the Jews and the dispersion of the Loyalists. When this urban Jewish widow chose to expose herself and her family to the unknown rigors of the Canadian wilderness, she showed herself to be not only a "woman of valor", but a woman of uncommon faith and loyalty to her compatriots and fellow refugees.

Select Bibliography:

Flick, A.C. Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution. New York; Amo Press, 1969 (pt.).


Q&A

Indigent burials

Q: My great-grandparents, Wolf and Yetta Lopatnikov (Lapat) immigrated from Estonia to Bowmanville, Ontario, in about 1893 with eight children. By 1901, they had moved to Toronto. In that year, they had a ninth child and both of them died (copies of death certificates enclosed). Please help me find out where these (probably indigent) Jews may have been buried. I am also looking for fuller death and immigration records.

Rabbi Charles D. Lippman
New York City

A: There is no record of anyone by the name of Lopatnikov or Lapat being buried at Pape Avenue, Jones Avenue or Dawes Road, the three Toronto Jewish cemeteries in use in 1901.

However, not all of the stones at Pape and Jones Avenue are legible, while many of the graves in the welfare section at Dawes Road were not marked with stones. Unfortunately, burial records for this section were destroyed by fire in the 1970s so there is no way to tell who is buried there.

Some Jews were buried in non-Jewish cemeteries like the Necropolis in Toronto, but the number is small.

For the past two years, members of our Society have been working on a project to transcribe and computerize the names on every Jewish tombstone in Toronto, and eventually all of Ontario. So far we have been occupied at Roselawn Cemetery, which began to be used about 1905, so our efforts are of little use in this particular case.

You should attempt to locate ship passenger list records for your great-grandparents, who probably arrived in Canada by way of Quebec City or Halifax. You should also find out whether citizenship records exist. Write to the National Archives, Genealogical Unit, References Services Section, 395 Wellington St., Ottawa, K1A 0N4, giving whatever information you can about your ancestors; and requesting the complimentary brochure, "Tracing Your Ancestors In Canada." The National Archives could advise you as to which ships your ancestors might have sailed. Good luck with your research.

Sephardic Search

Q: I am researching two families, Da Costa Ramos and Lopes Pena, alias Salvador. Both are of Spanish and Portuguese origin. I am trying to find out whether there are any records for the Montreal and New York communities before about 1820. I would appreciate any addresses or contact names.

David Gold
London, England
A: According to Catherine Da Costa, a member of our Society, her surname means "from the coast." Her family originated in Madeira, Portugal, and sailed from there to St. Vincent in the Caribbean in the 1880s; coming to Canada via Trinidad only in recent decades. Evidently there is no connection between her family and yours. Rabbi Yehiel Benayon of Toronto calls Lopes "one of the Mayflower names of the New York Sephardic community." You might try writing Rabbi Howard Joseph, Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, 4894 St. Kevin Ave., Montreal, P.Q. H3W 1P2; and Rabbi Mark Angel, Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, 8 - West 70th St., New York, N.Y. 10023. Good luck with your research.

Ontario Vital Records

Several microfilm reels available from the LDS Family History Library contain vital records from Ontario. Some are copies of original records maintained by the Division Registrar. These include records of birth, marriage and death for various time periods. Consult the Family History Library catalogue under ONTARIO, COUNTY, TOWNSHIP, VITAL RECORDS to find records for the area you require. Records of interest for the Toronto and York Region are as follows:

- Georgina Twp. BMD's 1895-1908 Reel 0207929
- Newmarket BMD's 1860-1904 Reel 0207888
- Scarborough Twp. BMD's 1873-1904 Reel 0230690
- Stouffville BMD's 1896-1901 Reel 007921 item 3
- North Toronto BMD's 1896-1907 Reel 0230899
- Weston BMD's 1896-1903 Reel 0230657
- Woodbridge BMD's 1896-1908 Reel 0207861 item 3
- York Twp. BMD's 1896-1904 Reel 0230678

Records of births, marriages and deaths are available from the Ontario Archives for the following years:
- Births (1869-1896), Marriages (1869-1911), Deaths (1869-1921).

The Archives also has access to most wills of deceased persons written in Ontario. Write to the Ontario Archives, 77 Grenville St., Toronto, Ontario M7A 2R9. Expect a response within about 90 days. The Archives does not charge for copies of records.

Toronto Jewish cemeteries: a history

- 1849: Pape Avenue Cemetery established by the pioneers of the congregation which was to become the Holy Blossom. Population of Jews in Toronto was less than one hundred.
- 1883: Jones Avenue Cemetery established by the congregation that would become the Beth Tzedec Synagogue Congregation. In 1906 the Chevra Kedusha of the Terauley Street and Chestnut Street synagogues began using this cemetery.
- 1898: First burial at the Dawes Road Cemetery.
- 1905: Roselawn Cemetery established.
- 1910: Royal York Road (Lambton) Cemetery established for members of the Junction Synagogue.
- 1928: McCowan Road Cemetery was established for the old Dovercourt St. Synagogue. This site is now under the supervision of the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue.
- 1933: Brimley Road Cemetery was established for the Holy Blossom Temple.
- 1935: Mt. Sinai Memorial Park Cemetery established on Wilson Avenue.
- 1939: Bathurst Lawn Cemetery was established on the east side of Bathurst Street, south of Steeles.
- 1949: Beth Tzedec Cemetery was established on Bathurst Street just north of Finch Ave.
- 1979: Pardes Sholom Cemetery was established on Dufferin Street north of Major Mackenzie Drive in Maple.

Charitable status received

After submitting an application about two years ago, our Society has just received status as a charitable organization from Revenue Canada. This means that we can now issue tax receipts for donations received from members and non-members.

We anticipate that this status will make it easier for us to obtain funding for our projects, such as the Cemetery Project. As well, we expect to be able to attain important publications for our library, and to provide more programs of interest throughout the year.

With enough donations and outside funding, we may purchase a computer for our Cemetery Project, even acquire our own office. Now more than ever, donations to our Society will be gladly accepted.

We are currently clarifying with Revenue Canada what portion of the membership dues will be eligible for a tax receipt. Watch this space for further information.

WordPerfect for Hebrew

In April, WordPerfect Corporation announced the release of a Hebrew language module compatible with WordPerfect 5.1 for DOS. The module allows bilingual text entry in columns, tables and text boxes. Insertion of either English or Hebrew can be done left-to-right or right-to-left. There is no speller or thesaurus for Hebrew. The module includes screen fonts, keyboard drivers, printer drivers and soft fonts for the Hewlett-Packard series II and III laser printers, Epson 24-pin printers, PostScript and PS-compatibles. A set of stick-on key labels accompany the package.

The $149 US package may be ordered directly from WordPerfect Corporation. For more information call WordPerfect's Information Services at 1-800-451-5151.
Finding doctors in the United States

By Howard Shidlowsky

I had been searching for clues to my mother's family for a few years. Adler, however, is a name that is almost as common as Cohen. I did not really want to try phoning all the Adlers in the phone books of Manhattan, the Bronx and White Plains, asking about people my mother hadn't seen since she was 19. There were three columns of Adlers in the White Plains white pages alone.

Fortunately, two members of the family were doctors. Charles Adler, my maternal grandfather's first cousin, had become a doctor after arriving from Poland some time before 1910. His son, Harold, had also attended medical school, eventually opening a practice as a dermatologist in Manhattan, then White Plains or Yonkers. I wrote to the information on either Charles or Harold. New York Academy of Medicine Library but it had no important pieces of information.

Visiting New York, I dropped by the public library. Guessing that a doctor would have a phone in his office by 1949 and knowing that Harold's office was in Manhattan, I looked at the phone book for Manhattan for 1949, the last year my mother lived in New York. I found a Dr. Charles Adler listed so I photocopied the page. When I asked my mother about it, she rhymed off the address. I don't know how she remembered it; I have trouble remembering my own phone number. But now I had a clue.

Not long afterward, my uncle (my mother's brother) visited from Israel. Seeing that I was looking for, but I was fairly certain. What I didn't see right away were two lines typed at the top of the page. This Harold Adler had practised medicine in the Bronx and White Plains, NY. I was on track.

To cut to the chase, I have since written and spoken to both Harold and his wife, Sylvia. They were as excited as I was when we spoke. I won't try to describe my joy. Harold has contacted other relatives to help update the family tree and pass on family history. I just mailed a package of photos. In my first conversation with Harold I learned more about my grandfather in five minutes than I had known before. The effort was more than worthwhile.

For information contact:
AMA Library and Archives, Attn: Graham Hastings, P.O. Box 10623, Chicago IL 60610 U.S.

Genealogical searches on American physicians:
1878 to 1905 - incomplete
1906 to 1969 - comprehensive

Required information: First and last names, time period, location, if known.
Cost: $15 per name.

Other sources:
NY University School of Medicine, Alumni Division, 550 First Ave., NY 10016 NY. (Note: This school absorbed Bellevue.)
NY State Library, Humanities/History, 6th Floor, Cultural Education Center, Albany NY 12230.
State Board of Medicine, State Education Dept., Cultural Education Center, Room 3023, Empire State Plaza, Albany NY 12230. (Note: This is the medical licensing body.)

New York Genealogical & Bibliographical Library, 122 E. 85th St., NY 10022-1939 NY.
New York Academy of Medicine Library, 2 East 103 St., NY 10029 NY.
From Suwalki to St. John's

**Seeking traces of his relatives, Montreal's Raymond Whitzman has transcribed almost all the Jewish cemeteries in Canada east of the Ottawa River**

By Bill Gladstone

In the course of researching his family tree -- a decade-long pursuit that has yielded more than six thousand family names -- Montrealer Raymond Whitzman (a JGSC member) has accomplished something quite extraordinary.

Whitzman, whose family came through the Maritimes, found out years ago that many Jews who settled in Atlantic Canada originated in one particular region of Lithuania, centering around a town called Dorbyan, or Darbenai on modern maps.

Therefore, in order to further his own genealogical research, he set about to transcribe most of the Jewish cemeteries of eastern Canada.

"I have all the Jewish cemeteries in Quebec and the Maritimes, excluding Montreal, listed in my computer," he says. "As for Montreal, there was no need for me to do that, since Paperman's funeral chapel has such good records. I've been getting copies of burial permits from them for years at no charge that have just as much information as death certificates." (See "Genealogical Resources in Montreal," in this issue.)

In Quebec, Whitzman has transcribed Jewish cemeteries in Quebec City, Sherbrooke and Ste. Sophie, a former Jewish farming district. In the Maritimes, he has transcribed cemeteries in St. John's, Nfld., Moncton, Fredericton and St. John, N.B., and Yarmouth, Glace Bay and Sydney, N.S. Two more cemeteries in Halifax "are about 85 percent completed," he says. "I have all the names but not all the exact dates."

"I've been working on this for about ten years now. It was worthwhile to transcribe all these cemeteries because a lot of Jews throughout the Maritimes were related to me." Whitzman estimates he has done as many as 1,500 Quebec transcriptions and another 2,000 for the Maritimes. He has also recorded a Jewish cemetery in Patterson, New Jersey, containing some 2,000 names. "A lot of Jewish people went to Patterson from the Maritimes," he explains. "It was an important silk manufacturing region. Many people with relatives in the Maritimes also had relatives in New Jersey."

Besides visiting cemeteries, he has interviewed dozens of relatives, found old obituaries, and corresponded with Lithuanian archival sources to add many new branches to his family tree. He has received an estimated 300 birth records, in Russian and Hebrew, from the towns of Dorbyan and Mariampol in the Lithuanian district of Suwalki.

"For about $20, I get about six or seven records at a time. I write to them in Lithuanian -- I use a translator. I would recommend doing it that way."

Anyone interested in the Suwalki district should seek out "The Landsman," a small quarterly publication in which articles about the region and translations of documents from local towns are published, says Whitzman, who is involved with the journal.

"We're the only group that is translating documents and publishing them from the Mormon library. Most of the documents are Polish, since that part of Lithuania was connected with Poland in the last century." The newsletter costs $24 yearly. For more information, write to the Suwalk-Lomza Interest Group, Apt 228, 3701 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington DC 20008.

Whitzman ran a small Jewish genealogical society in Montreal several years ago; it is now defunct. He intends to start up another, perhaps as a division of JGS Canada.

Anyone interested in joining should phone him at (514) 489-4094 or write to 5787 McAlear Ave., Cote St. Luc, Que. H4W 2H3. He will respond to requests for information about Jewish burials that are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
Montreal is celebrating its 350th anniversary this year, and although Jews have lived there for about 250 years, it was only at the end of the 19th century that the Jewish population was augmented by a fairly sizable influx. For more than 50 years Montreal enjoyed her status as the "capital" of the Jewish community in Canada. Since the influx. For more than 50 years Montreal enjoyed her status the Jewish population was augmented by a fairly sizable Montreal) and the head offices of most major Jewish community organizations.

Naturally, over the course of 250 years, Montreal has acquired a vast Jewish legacy. Its Jewish members have made valuable contributions not only to the Jewish community but also to the community at large.

The key resources in Montreal for Jewish genealogical research are the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, the funeral chapels Paperman and Sons and Chesed Shel Emes, and the Jewish Public Library.

CONGRESS ARCHIVES
The National Archives of Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), at 1590 ave. Docteur Penfield, Montreal, Quebec H3G 1C5, houses the records of three organizations which were instrumental in aiding the settlement of Jewish immigrants. These institutions are the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA), the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada (JIAS) -- equivalent to HIAS elsewhere -- and the United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies of Canada (UJRA).

Since the CJC does not answer genealogical inquiries by mail, research into their holdings has to be conducted on site by the researcher or a representative.

The JCA collection dates from 1904 and includes correspondence, individual case files and legal records.

CD: 28 administrative files dealing with immigration problems (1904-1959), including the detention in 1921 of Jewish immigrants arriving in Canadian ports, as well as the entry into Canada in 1932 of 3,300 Jewish refugees from Russia and Romania.

CC: Nominal lists of Jewish refugees coming to Canada from Liverpool in 1906-1907 and from Bucharest 1924-25.

The JIAS records cover the period from its founding in 1919 to 1975. From 1920 to 1930 JIAS assisted forty thousand Jewish immigrants and facilitated the release of three thousand immigrants who had been detained. Only six thousand Jewish immigrants were admitted to Canada between 1930 and 1945, but after WWII, approximately one hundred thousand Jews fleeing from Hungary, Romania, Morocco and the Soviet Union have been helped, and more from Israel and other countries.

CA: numbered case and subject files 1920-1951. Case files on all immigrants processed by JIAS during the given period. Arranged numerically according to the chronological sequence in which the files were opened.


H: Location case files 1921-1975. Requests by individuals seeking to locate relatives or friends all over the world. Alphabetical.

JIAS restricts access to the case files because of their sensitive nature. For permission to use these records, write to JIAS, 5151 Chemin de la Cote Sainte Catherine, Montreal, Quebec H3W 1M6.

In 1938, a merger of more than a half dozen organizations participating in refugee assistance resulted in the establishment of the UJRA. During WWII the organization assisted Jewish evacuees and escapees and interned refugees from Austria and Germany. (More than two thousand German-Jewish refugees were interned in Canada after being deported from Britain in 1940 as enemy aliens.) After the war, UJRA assisted Holocaust survivors. Access to the UJRA files is restricted but undoubtedly the records contain important genealogical information.

FUNERAL CHAPELS & LIBRARY
The largest and oldest funeral chapel in Montreal is Paperman & Sons, 5606 Cote des Neiges, Montreal, Quebec H3T 1V8, with records starting in 1914. The other chapel serves the Hassidic community, Chesed Shel Emes of Montreal, 935 Beaumont, Montreal, Quebec. The CJC Archives has membership and death records of the Hebrew Sick Benefit Association dating from its inception in 1892.

The Jewish Public Library of Montreal, 5151 Chemin de la Cote St. Catherine, Montreal, Quebec H3W 1M6, has an extensive collection of Judaica including Yiskor books. Also available are Canadian Jewish newspapers.

Bibliography:
2. "JIAS Inventories at Canadian Jewish Congress." No author. Avotaynu, III, 2, 16, Spring 1987. [Preliminary inventories prepared by CJC staff of not only JIAS holdings, but also JCA and UJRA materials—RL]
Your family history: has it been published?


By Miriam Weiner

Suppose one of your distant cousins, three times removed, has been busy collecting material about your family history and has published the book where it now sits in some library unknown to you. Perhaps this is a cousin you have never met or who has been separated by generations because your grandmothers or aunts stopped speaking years ago over something, most likely trivial.

All "how-to" books in the genealogy world direct the researcher to begin with the family name. One book which accompanies me to my lecture programs is always in hot demand because it is a potential link to published family histories housed in Judaic libraries through the world. In "Jewish Genealogy: A Sourcebook of Family Histories, and Genealogies/ Vol. I," authors Zubatsky and Berent identify the genealogies, family trees and histories of over 3,500 Jewish family names. This comprehensive work was compiled from major sources found in books, newspaper and journal articles, Jewish encyclopedia entries, family papers and family trees. The material is available in archival repositories and libraries (not private collections) and locations are given, with cross-referenced entries.

In early 1988, Bernard I. Kouchel of Ft. Lauderdale attended a South Florida lecture and became very excited when he announced that "I found my family!" A word of caution is necessary here -- I always remind people that just because they find an entry for their surname and even the same locality, it isn't always possible to conclude it is their family if it is a very common name.

However, Kouchel was sure immediately because the entry referred to a 1914 publication in Palestine by Elimelech Israeli, brother to Kouchel's grandfather. Within a few weeks, Kouchel obtained a copy of the book from the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.

The subsequent English translation revealed detailed accounts of the lives of many of the author's descendants and three generations of ancestors. Also cited in the book was "Da'at Kedoshim," written in 1896 by a family member which recounts an additional seven generations. One branch of the tree led back to a rabbinical judge in Frankfort in 1570 and another branch traced lineage back to Prince Saul Wahl (1541-1617) who, according to the Encyclopedia Judaica, is the grandson of Meir Katzenellenbogen (c. 1482-1565), the renowned Chief Rabbi of the Venetian Republic.

Of course, family history research not only leads one into their past, but frequently results in newly-discovered relatives. Ultimately, Kouchel traveled to Israel where he met over 50 "cousins" including his second cousin, Israeli Air Force Capt. Dan Efrat, who shares his passion for genealogy.

For Kouchel, the leap back through the generations was easy because of the family connection found in the Zubatsky/Berent book. Since 1984 when the book was published, many "roots" enthusiasts have published their material and so it was with much anticipation that we waited for an update which became "Jewish Genealogy: A Sourcebook of Family Histories/ Vol. II." In the introduction to Vol. II, Zubatsky discusses the "ever-increasing popularity of Jewish genealogy throughout the world causing genealogies to be compiled at a much greater rate than ever before."

This book serves another purpose besides possibly linking you to your published family history. If you do not find your name, perhaps it will motivate you to compile and publish your own book about the family, utilizing family documents, old photos, information about the ancestral town -- perhaps even a visit there.

Until you make such a visit, identify old photos, preserve family documents, get to know your relatives at a family reunion. When you get all your research organized, publish it in sufficient quantities for the Judaic libraries and archives that collect such works. Perhaps Zubatsky's next volume will include your family history, if it isn't there now.
Synagogues of Toronto, 1926.
Clockwise from right:
McCaul Street Synagogue.
Spadina Avenue Synagogue.
Henry Street Synagogue.
Bond Street Synagogue.
University Avenue Synagogue.

All synagogue illustrations, including those on pages 4 and 10, are from "The Jew in Canada" by Arthur D. Hart, 1926.

Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada
Toronto Division
P.O Box 446 Station 'A'
Willowdale, Ontario
M2N 5T1 Canada