



שם טוב  
**SHEM TOV**

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

VOLUME XX No. 3

September 2004 Tishrei 5765

**SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS AND FRIENDS**

*In his discussion of the Eight Degrees of Charity (a good topic with which to begin the New Year), the renowned scholar Maimonides states: "The greatest degree, above which there is no other, is to strengthen the name of another Jew ...." Our Society, and the world of Jewish genealogy in general, is dependent upon the many volunteers dedicated to "strengthening the name" of others. We have had, and will have, the privilege of telling you about some of our Society's volunteers. In this issue, we profile the late **Harold Nissenthall**:*

"Harold was the kind of guy that helped everyone out... a very, very nice guy.... someone who went far beyond the call of duty." Such are the phrases unfailingly used by his friends and colleagues to describe Harold Nissenthall.

Harold's particular talent was in audiovisual technology. (If you have visited Toronto's museums or Science Centre, you will likely have seen some of his work.) He donated liberally of this talent, to the great benefit of the JGS and its members. Do you remember the spectacular opening and closing ceremonies at the Toronto IAJGS Conference? This was Harold's contribution, as was just about every other detail of physical plant planning at this Conference. This contribution is one of the elements that made the Conference such a success.

Equally important was Harold's support of others - helping "everyone who had a problem," perhaps creating a display or recording for someone (often just as a "nice" thing to do). Fittingly, his last project before his untimely death was the printing of a 4' x 5' display of a rabbinic family tree.

Not surprisingly, Harold was dedicated to family. He would often speak with much admiration of his older brother, a war hero at Dieppe. Recently he was responsible for bringing together many parts of his extended fam-

ily - from London, South Africa, the US and Buenos Aires. He put cousins in touch with each other, and found family in Israel.

Last, but certainly not least, Harold was a great friend, the sort of person you could meet for breakfast at the local greasy spoon, and with whom you could discuss anything....

He is missed.

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF HAROLD NISSENTHALL, Z"l

*Special thanks to Garry Stein, Gert Rogers and Carolynne Veffer.*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Programs organized by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue - 470 Glencairn Avenue (unless otherwise noted)*

Doors open at 7:30, program begins at 8 p.m.

Non-member fee: \$5.00 per meeting

Our meeting schedule for 2004-2005 has been tentatively set as follows:

### **Monday, September 27, 2004**

*Speaker: Bill Gladstone*

*Topic: The How, What and Why of Canadian*

*Naturalization Records*

*Available from Ottawa through the Access to Information Act, the naturalization papers filed by our immigrant relatives offer a treasure-trove of details of family history. Bill Gladstone, a former president of our Society and author of the "Roots and Remembrance" column in the Canadian Jewish News, will explain how to apply for and interpret these valuable genealogical documents.*

### **Thursday, October 21, 2004**

Neil Richler will present a program, in cooperation with the JGS, on *Computers and Genealogy—Why do we do Jewish genealogy and how can we use the Internet for research?*

Venue: Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., at Bloor

Time: 7:30 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Admission: Members \$8/Non-members \$10

**Registration required (416) 924-6211**

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The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada was founded in 1985 and currently has over 200 members. Membership costs \$36 per calendar year, \$18 for students. (Please note that the out of town reduction has been deleted). Meetings are held September to June, usually on the last Wednesday of each month at 8:00 p.m. (doors open at 7:30) at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto (unless announced otherwise). Guests are always welcome. Details are usually printed in the *Canadian Jewish News* and on our website at: [www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca).

The goals of the Society are to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge and information through meetings, outings, workshops and guest lecturers, and thereby to promote an awareness of genealogy within the Jewish community of Canada. The Society is affiliated with the Jewish Federation of Greater Toronto and is registered as a non-profit charitable organization.

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Upcoming Events *cont'd from page 2*

**Sunday, October 31, 2004, 3:30 p.m.**

**In association with Holocaust Education Week**

Speaker: Marco Carynnyk

Topic: Ukrainians, Jews & Poles in Eastern Galicia, June-July 1941

*In the weeks after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, a swath of regions extending from the Black Sea to the Baltic witnessed a horrendous set of double murders. As the Wehrmacht advanced, the NKVD emptied its overcrowded prisons by slaughtering the inmates. Within days pogroms also erupted in these same regions. Marco Carynnyk is a writer, editor, and historical researcher, and focuses his historical studies on the Ukrainian famine of 1933, Soviet and Nazi repressions in the 1930s and 1940s, and Jewish-Ukrainian relations. He will discuss excerpts from a forthcoming book about the NKVD killings and pogrom in the town of Zolochiv in western Ukraine. His talk will be illustrated with maps and photographs.*

**Wednesday, November 24, 2004**

Speaker: Judi Wagman & Elaine Cheskes

Topic: *Unlocking the Secrets of the Past: Korystiv to Kensington*

**PLUS**

Speaker: Roberto Stopnicki

Topic: *In Search of Bedzin, Poland*

**Wednesday, December 15, 2004**

Speaker: Eric Stein

Topic: *Jewish Soul Music: The Historical Development of Klezmer in Eastern Europe*

**PLUS** *Society Elections and a Chanukah Party*

*Klezmer music, the instrumental folk music of Eastern Jewry, was an integral component of Jewish cultural life throughout and beyond the Pale of Settlement. Using recorded musical examples for illustration, Eric Stein will discuss the many aspects of klezmer's historical and ethnomusicological development. Eric Stein has an M.A. in history from McGill University. He is also a multi-instrumental professional musician, specializing in the performance of klezmer music, and the founder/leader of Beyond the Pale, with whom he has released two critically-acclaimed CDs. He has lectured and performed across North America.*

**Wednesday, January 26, 2005**

Speaker: Marian Press

Topic: *Using Internet Search Engines Effectively for Genealogy Research*

*This presentation will deal with using both general and specialized search tools in family history searches on the Internet, and offer tips and tricks for making your results specific and relevant. Marian Press is a librarian at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. She has taught a variety of courses on Web use and design for the FIS Professional Learning Institute at the University of Toronto, The National Institute for Genealogical Studies, the Ontario Library Association, and the Toronto Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society.*

**Wednesday, February 16, 2005**

Speaker: Anna Shternshis

Topic: *Jewish Families in the Soviet Union*

**Wednesday, March 30, 2005**

Speaker: Rolf Lederer

Topic: T.B.A.

*PLUS 20th Anniversary Celebration*

**Wednesday, April 20, 2005**

*Tour of Toronto Archives*

**Wednesday, May 25, 2005**

*Programme T.B.A.*

**Wednesday, June 29, 2005**

*Annual General Meeting and Member Breakthroughs*

*For further information visit our website at [www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca) or watch the "What's New" column in the Canadian Jewish News.*

***We Welcome These New Members to Our Society***

Geni Brafman Bahar

Carol Hamilton

Myrna Levy

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## *The Use of Land Titles Records for Genealogical Research*

*by Glen Eker*

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**I**n this short article I would like to acquaint the reader with a little used source of genealogical research: land title records. Land title records are any documents or records pertaining to the buying, selling, leasing, or renting of a property. The kind of information included in a land title document may vary but may include names, ages, occupations, marital status, names of spouse and children, addresses, dates of birth, marriage, and death. Land title documents often also include birth, marriage, and death certificates, and estate files as attachments to other documents or as separate documents themselves called "Documents General." Typical land title documents are deeds of land, mortgages, discharge of mortgage, leases, affidavits, land transfers, tax documents, court orders, documents general, and any other type of document that can be associated with a property. The names and addresses of the lawyers who execute the documents are almost always listed.

Land title records are obtained through a land title search at the local Land Registry Office. The Toronto Land Registry Office is located on the third and fourth floors of the Atrium on Bay. The side entrance facing the Eaton Center on Dundas Street has the correct elevators to use.

In order to obtain land title documents, a land title search must be conducted. There are two ways to do this. The first and easiest way is to use the PINFIND Computer. Most City of Toronto and Toronto borough street addresses have been entered into a computerized database so that one simply has to enter the address to obtain the Plan and Lot Number of the property. If an address, however, does not exist in the present, but it did in the past, or the street has not been computerized, it will not appear on the computer. For most properties, documents registered in the 1990's are listed on the computer beginning with the year the computer abstracting process first began for that particular property. A computerized abstract page can be printed out. Documents prior to the 1990's are in hard cover abstract books. In order to activate the PINFIND Computer and print from it a copy card must be obtained from the cashier on the fourth floor.

The second way to find a Plan and Lot Number is to do a microfiche search. There are separate microfiches for Toronto, Etobicoke, Scarborough, York, East York, West York, and North York. First, search the street index microfiche and find and record the Map, Sub, and Parcel Numbers for a property. Then go to the microfiche that would have the appropriate Map, Sub, and Parcel Numbers as recorded and locate them on the microfiche. It will list the street address along with the Plan and Lot Number. For newer listings, such as many of those after 1990, the computer will still have to be used as the newer registered documents are only on computerized abstract pages.

For pre-1990's documents there is a catalogue of Toronto Lot and Plan Numbers that states which hardcover abstract books to look at. To trace a property through the decades,

numerous books may have to be consulted. The abstract book or computerized abstract pages list the Plan and Lot Number and all registered documents associated with it. The names of people associated with the document are listed in the abstract book and in the computerized abstract pages. Record the numbers and the dates of registration of the documents you are interested in. For example, the letters GR 1735 indicate that the document is an estate file. The date September 15, 1935 indicates that the document was registered on that date.

All documents are on microfilm reels. There are catalogues listing document numbers and corresponding microfilm reels for most pre-1947 documents and for most post-1947 documents. For others, mostly after 1947, file cabinets will list their contents on the outside by Toronto borough, date, and document number. They will also be listed on the microfilm reel boxes. These microfilm reels will almost always contain a variety of documents with a number of different letter series for a specific period of time. For example, EA10011 – WE 20221, September 1, 1954 – September 30, 1954 -this means that all letter series between EA and WE, such as GR, are included in the reel. They are also not necessarily in order so considerable searching must often be done. Thus, a land title document with a specific number, such as WD 15679, depending upon the date and part of Toronto it was registered in, may be located by either consulting the microfilm reel catalogues or going directly to the file cabinets and checking what dates and parts of Toronto are included in the microfilm reels located in the file cabinets. It should also be noted that while the majority of land title documents are on microfilm, there are also large numbers that are on microfiche and it is generally better to ask a staff member for help when trying to locate these.

The search process in the Toronto Land Registry Office is not easy for the beginner and takes some getting used to. Obtaining the Lot and Plan number is generally the easiest part of the process. There are separate abstract book sections for the City of Toronto, Etobicoke, Scarborough, York, East York, West York, and North York, and even for areas within the city and its boroughs, such as for Forest Hill Village. Many are, however, shelved close to each other, have similar abstract book numbers, and have similar lot and plan numbers. There are, also, what is called D Plans, which are themselves separate abstract books that may include parts of the City of Toronto and its boroughs. The locating of the microfilm reels containing the land title documents can also be confusing until the researcher gets used to using the catalogues and the file cabinet listings. Many land title documents are on microfiche. Thus, the researcher sometimes has to determine whether to look on microfilm or microfiche. The best thing to do if you have a problem is to ask a staff member for help. If you have never used the Land Registry Office before, it will take a number of visits before you get used to it.

One interesting resource available at the Land Registry Office is the General Register Wills York County. This is a register that consists of multiple volumes listing estate files/wills that have been registered on title with a property. It is different than the York County Surrogate Court Indexes available at the Archives of Ontario on Grenville Street and at the Ontario Court General Division, 393 University Avenue, tenth floor, in that it only lists estate files/will that were registered on title with a property for its purchase or sale. The index dates from the 1800's to the 1990's. There are also indexes for Ontario County but they do not cover such a wide period of time. The indexes may list the person's name, the date the will was registered, the date the will was probated, the executor or executors, and the GR number that allows for the will to be found on either microfilm or microfiche.

It should be mentioned that the research situation is not the same in all Ontario Land Registry Offices. For example, the Hamilton Land Registry Office located at 119 King Street West has both the PINFIND Computer and the microfiches available for obtaining Plan and Lot Numbers. There are, however, very few hardcover abstract indexes. The majority of the abstract indexes have been microfilmed. The original hardcover indexes were sent to the Archives of Ontario on Grenville Street. There are also detailed catalogues indicating on what reels abstract books specific to plan and lot numbers can be located. All documents are located on microfilm reels.

*Glen Eker, a longtime member of the Society, has written many articles on the genealogical use of government records.*

## ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by November 2004 for the Winter 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.

	One Issue	Four Issues (one year)
Full Page	\$60	\$200
Half Page	\$30	\$100
Quarter Page	\$18	\$ 60
Eighth Page	\$10	\$ 32

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

## UPDATE ON DONATIONS: CANADIAN TAX RECEIPT NOW AVAILABLE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO JEWISH RECORDS INDEXING - POLAND

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) and Jewish Records Indexing - Poland have reached a milestone agreement, under which Canadian contributors to JRI-Poland indexing projects will be able to obtain a Canadian tax receipt.

Canadian researchers will be able to make their JRI-Poland donations and Excel file qualifying contributions in Canadian dollars.

Details are as follows:

- The minimum donation to qualify for a receipt is \$25.00 (Canadian).
- Cheques must be made out to **JGS of Canada (Toronto)** and mailed to the Society address:  
Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto)  
PO Box 91006  
2901 Bayview Ave.  
Toronto, ON M2K 2Y6
- If you are making a donation to a particular project, cheques must indicate "JRI-Poland [project name] Indexing Project." For general indexing fund contributions, cheques must indicate "JRI-Poland General Indexing Fund."
- Clearly provide your name and mailing address, phone number and e-mail address (if any) to receive your tax receipt.
- For 2004 donations, receipts will be mailed out in January/February 2005. Thereafter, receipts will be mailed monthly.
- The rate of exchange will be listed on the JRI-Poland web site and will be modified to correspond with the effective exchange rate on the first business day of each month.

For further information, please go to the JRI-Poland web site at [www.jri-poland.org](http://www.jri-poland.org) and click on the "Support/Donations" link at the top of the home page. Look for the heading "Important tax benefit notice to Canadian Contributors."

This new agreement is an extension of the long-standing and successful relationship between the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) and JRI-Poland. The JGS Toronto has operated the JRI-Poland / Toronto JGS Copy Service since 1998. JGS Toronto volunteers make photocopies of index pages from LDS microfilms using the modern equipment at the Toronto Reference Library. For more information on this project, go to [www.jri-poland.org/toronto.htm](http://www.jri-poland.org/toronto.htm)

For more information about JGS Toronto, go to [www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca)

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## Genealogy and Reunions

by Merle Kastner

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Having pursued my family quest for the last eleven years, and with no end in sight (people often ask if I'm 'finished the family tree' – ha!), I have often been asked, "when you find all these cousins, what are you going to do with them?" This, particularly when someone discovers that I have 8,000 documented relatives, both living and deceased, plus bunches of not-yet-connected branches of potential relatives.

Questions like this are usually asked by well-intentioned souls who have a limited interest in genealogy, at best. We all know the type - those whose eyes glass over and who start fidgeting as soon as we start talking about family history, research, resources, libraries, cousins they never heard of and so on. And then, anyone who has 'found' lots of cousins has surely been asked - many times over - when 'the reunion' will take place, expecting us to put it all together for everyone.

We've all seen newspaper articles, sporting group photos, describing large family reunions, usually spread over a weekend and involving upwards of one or several hundred enthusiastic relatives, the majority of whom are not even close to being genealogists, but who love the socializing. Many of these people have traveled from other cities to attend these events, usually organized by a handful of people or even by one dedicated person. This is an intimidating and time-consuming job, but the results are exciting and well worth the effort. Everyone has a wonderful time. Often family newsletters spring out of these gatherings.

What comes to mind is my first experience attending such a reunion. The Goldberg/Gordon/Garbarski Reunion took place in 1991 at Montreal's Sheraton Centre, a Saturday night dinner, followed by an afternoon at the country home of one of the family members. Approximately 110 people attended, arriving from various cities in Canada and the U.S.A. My genealogy muse, Irwin Miller of Stamford, Connecticut, was the main organizer. This was one, actually the last, of a series of successful reunions of this branch of the family, but my first. The evening ended with a slide show of photographs taken by Irwin during his trip to our ancestral shtetl, Sejny in northeastern Poland. At this point, interest waned and after a few minutes, evaporated. It was at this point that I became, not only fascinated by the presentation, but discouraged by the lack of attention shown. However, it was not until the following year that I became seriously involved in genealogy – just after my mother passed away.

During the course of the last six or seven years, I have found a less spectacular, but nevertheless satisfying solution to the 'reunion dilemma' - mini-reunions.

What is a 'mini-reunion'? The first one came into being when, during the course of a conversation with one Kastner cousin about seven years ago, she invited me to lunch. Connie Rottenberg Halickman, excited by the idea of a family tree, wanted to meet me and suggested inviting her daughters along. Her niece also came to the restaurant. So we were five. It was a lovely and warm meeting and we vowed to repeat the experience.

The next level was reached when we planned our second

get-together. The guest list grew to a proposed 18 women at a kosher restaurant. Everything was arranged within a week and the excitement was contagious. We promised to meet again soon.

A few months later, with two weeks to the date of the gathering, I telephoned sixty Kastner cousins, all of whom lived within a 200-mile radius of Montreal. As it was summertime, many were on holiday and out of town, but 35 women were still able to come to lunch at the same kosher restaurant. We engaged a private room for this event. We considered ourselves lucky to have had some visiting out-of-towners present - one living in Israel, another from southern Vermont, to mention only two. The event was declared a rousing success.

Then the men became jealous – 'how was it that only women were invited'? It must be mentioned here that the Kastner Clan numbers 1,800 in my database, and inviting whole families could well attract 500 to 600 people, to estimate roughly. Knowing the Kastners, hordes would arrive, expecting a full weekend of planned activities, gourmet kosher food and so forth. At this point, I slacked off somewhat. My solution would have been to plan a Sunday afternoon coffee, cake and schnapps event for all interested parties, planning it all two or three weeks in advance. More than that would have necessitated a whole evening's entertainment, which would inevitably grow into the feared weekend bash. It hasn't materialized yet, but it's in the long-term plans that I have filed for future reference... perhaps when I retire...

Suddenly, out of nowhere four years ago, appeared the eminent genealogist, Michael Tobias, of Glasgow, Scotland. His JRI-Poland research had produced a connection between our family, rendering us fourth cousins. Michael asked me to phone several people in North America, whom he had found on the online telephone directories and whom he believed were 'ours'. They were. One of them was Pauline Eisner, living a block away from where I worked at the time, but whom I had never heard of. Ironically, her grandson was due to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah several weeks later. Michael, his wife Jane, two daughters Becca and Suzie and Michael's mother "Beattie" arrived in time to attend the Bar Mitzvah and meet the family. Afterwards, Pauline invited all the out-of-towners to dinner at her home – about 35 people, who had come from New York, California and Florida. I invited the Tobiases and a smaller group to brunch to meet my side of the newly-discovered Denenberg/Dynaburski/Denburghski family members.

Other meetings followed, usually impromptu ones...a small gathering here of 20 people, another one there, often spurred on by out-of-town visitors. Current plans are being formulated to have a Nathanson reunion luncheon in Hamden, Connecticut at the club of one cousin this November. All those involved, numbering about 70 people, live no more than two to six hours from Hamden, making it easily accessible to all. The lunchtime format was chosen, as it would allow everyone to

return home that evening, eliminating the necessity of staying over for a second night. Some of us have never met, others have not seen one another for decades.

The next project is a Kussner family reunion. The inspiration for this is derived from the discovery of Conrad Kussner, one of a 'lost' branch of Kussners, who led me to a large number of other Kussners. Coincidentally, Conrad and his wife Joy live in Birmingham, Alabama, where my daughter-in-law's parents also live. We have met on the two occasions I was in Birmingham. Conrad's great-grandfather, my great-grandmother's brother, died at age 31 after a fall down an elevator shaft in Montreal. He left behind his wife and three little boys. They moved to the New York area and were lost to the family. I received an e-mail from an excited Conrad three years ago – he had found me on JewishGen FamilyFinders...and the rest is history. The Kussner reunion will be a slightly more ambitious project than the Nathanson one. It will draw people from the New York and New Jersey areas, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Florida, Montreal and Toronto, perhaps even Vancouver.

This coming weekend will see the mini-est one of all – four cousins, one from Calgary, one from Buffalo, myself from Montreal and one from Hamilton - will be meeting for lunch in Hamilton. We all grew up together in Montreal and Sherbrooke, but this is the first time for us.

These reunions, be they large, medium or small, give meaning and life to genealogy. They provide wonderful depth to the research, facts, dry names and dates. Stories are exchanged, photos produced. Relatives who were not previously in contact with the family are brought closer to the fold. There are all sorts of online sites to help with the organization of reunions, but I would say – don't aim for the grandiose version - keep it as simple as possible, but do it. Reunions are well worth all the time and effort required for the planning, anticipation and execution, bringing rich rewards for all.

*Merle Kastner, of the JGS of Montreal, can be reached at merlek@videotron.ca, telephone: 514.735.4739*

Researching: KASTNER & OSTFELD (Radauti, Fratauti, Bukovina), NATHANSON & MENDELSSOHN (Piatra Neamt, Falticeni, Negulesti, Romania), GARBARSKI & DENENBERG/DYNABURSKI (Sejny/Suwalki gubernia area, Poland), KUSSNER (Bendery/Tighina, Moldova; Philadelphia, PA), SCZUCZYNSKI & MILLER (Lida & Vilnius, Lithuania/Belarus; Philadelphia, PA.), ALTMAN (USA, Belchatow, Poland), LEVITT & KISHELEVETZ (New York, Lodz, Poland), FUCHS/FOX (Dubno, Poland), SINGER ("Zitrisk"/Starry Chartoriysk, Ukraine)

## SHANAH TOVAH

**A year of peace, health and happiness to all**

## TWO IMPORTANT ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY COLLECTION

### **Encyclopaedia Judaica**

Thanks to the generous donation of Laura Petersiel, our library now has a copy of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1974 edition (16 vols., plus 3 Yearbooks). This work provides an invaluable first step in genealogical research, including overviews on Jewish history, as well as articles, maps and bibliographies for specific towns.

### **The Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy Edited by Sallyann Sack & Gary Mokotoff Avotaynu, Bergenfeld, New Jersey, 2004**

Reviewed by Henry Wellisch

After years of preparation, Avotaynu has finally come out with this 600-page collection of vital information on practically all aspects of Jewish genealogy. The book is headed with a foreword by Arthur Kurzweil, one of the fathers of Jewish genealogy, and is followed by 5 major parts. Among the many contributors we find names which are familiar to many Jewish genealogists, such as Warren Blatt, Randy Daitch, Karen Franklin, Peter Landé, Nancy Levin Arbeiter, Gary Mokotoff, Eileen Polakoff, Sallyann Sack and many others.

#### **PART I: The Essentials of Jewish Genealogical Research.**

There are 10 articles in this section, dealing with subjects such as: Shtetl and Holistic Geography, Jewish Naming Practices, Organized Jewish Genealogy (which covers JewishGen and others). One of the articles, entitled The Art of the Interview, was contributed by our former president, Bill Gladstone.

#### **PART II: Topical Section**

There are 9 articles on items such as Holocaust Research, the Internet, Rabbinical Research, Directories, Newspapers, Cemetery Research, etc.

#### **PART III: U.S. Research**

In this 70-page section we find 12 articles on subjects such as: Ships Manifests & other Immigration Records; Naturalization, Vital, and Census Records; Archives & Repositories; Museums; New York City Research; Wills and Probate; and World War I Draft Records.

#### **PART IV: Researching Country of Ancestry**

There is no question that this section of nearly 400 pages is the most important part of the book. It covers no fewer than 52 specific countries, and the editors have assembled a long list of genealogists who prepared individual articles on the countries of their expertise. In all cases there is an overview of the history of the Jews of the country, followed by lists of important addresses of archives, museums, libraries and other repositories. There usually is also a bibliography of literature in English as well as in the local language on the Jews of the country. In

*cont'd on page 8*

some cases relevant web sites are also mentioned.

As you can imagine, the most extensive series of articles, covering 32 pages, is on Poland, but countries with smaller Jewish populations are also very well covered. For example, the article on Denmark has 7 pages.

Two members of our Society contributed to this section: Nora Freund with her article on the Czech Republic, and Henry Wellisch on Austria.

Apart from the 52 specific countries, there are also articles on such former entities as the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian Empires.

#### **PART V: Appendixes**

These include: Alphabets, Hiring a Professional Genealogist, Engaging Your Children in Family History Research, the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex System, a Relationship Chart.

#### **MAPS:**

Maps of Central & Eastern Europe: before World War I, between the Wars, 1991, and the present, of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, the Pale of Settlement including the Kingdom of Poland, the Kingdom of Hungary, Interwar Poland, and Galicia.

All in all, one can say that this is an indispensable resource for anyone interested in Jewish genealogy, beginner or advanced. I strongly suggest you visit our library and take a close look at it.

### **MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF SHEM TOV**

We are interested in relevant material for Shem Tov. If you have something to report, don't hesitate to contact us at:  
**shemtov@jgstoronto.ca**

## ***Making Your Own Legacy Video***

*by Len Scher*

**M**y mother began writing a book about her life a few years ago. Her story was fascinating. She lived through the Holocaust, started a new life in a strange country, even obtained a high school diploma at age 70. It was obvious her life story needed capturing as a legacy for my sister and me, her grandchildren, and now her great grandchildren. She had a few pages ready for me to look through. But time was crowding. My mother was approaching her 80th birthday. A book would take years to complete, so I preferred to capture her life story in the medium I knew best. The project became her hour-long "legacy" video.

I had begun producing and directing television documentaries 25 years ago, when it required a whole crew to do the shortest interview for a "biography"-type show. At the CBC and the NFB, we went out with a van filled with equipment to be handled by a sound person, a cameraperson and sometimes a producer or writer to accompany the director. Then video editors took over, molding the footage into a documentary. In those days, we called our video equipment, the 2-ton pencil.

It is less expensive to do a professional interview today. The equipment is lighter and cutting-edge technology has replaced a crew. That is why I believe almost anyone can produce a professional-looking video biography of the life and times of their parents. There is even a trend for corporations to produce video biographies as parting gifts for their retirees. Seniors are also becoming tech savvy and experimenting with video.

This is a digital age and legacy videos are becoming popular. Steven Spielberg gave the idea a boost when he funded the Shoah Foundation to videotape survivors' first hand testimony of the Holocaust. Shoah's trained videographers fanned out across the continent to record the hundreds of World War II experiences. Of course, you can hire a professional videographer, or you can try it yourself. The result can be preserved on a DVD and serve as a reminder of your subject's unique life.

As a consultant and videographer, I am often asked: What is involved in doing this? I point out first it is more than merely pointing a lens at someone in the hope it will all come out right. Your video should be entertaining with a professional look about it, using titles, dissolves, tight editing and proper lighting, music and sound.

In the beginning, do some research and seek out some old photographs or newspaper clippings. To make it entertaining, the DVD should contain photos of your subject at various stages of life.

Every subject needs a listener/interviewer. So be an attentive and respectful listener. It will keep your subject focused and energized. Have most of your questions ready, but be prepared to inquire when something isn't clear, or to prod the memory for more details. People are apt to gloss over the details: "We went to visit the Pyramids in Egypt for our thirtieth anniversary and that was interesting." Yes, so what was interesting on that trip? Did the imposing size of the great Pyramid



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make you feel insignificant? Or did it make you wonder how it was possible to build such a thing in that age?

A good interviewer is also a good guide, making sure to cover a life story chronologically. You should include the following: school years, relationships, children, career, special influences and friends. All these topics may be considered chapters in the video, with titles added later for these various segments. A listener plays the part of the eventual viewer. What might he or she want to know more? Did we miss anything?

I genuinely enjoy doing legacy videos because of what I may learn. I end my video by asking generally what a person has learned about life. Inquisitiveness brings out surprising results. "I had no idea my father (or mother) had done that in their early years," is a common response after someone views the life story. Think of what you may learn about your parents. Clients have said they learned so much from the tape - even offspring would comment on how they didn't know certain aspects of their parents' early years.

A prospective client once asked why he couldn't simply point a camera at himself and then tell his story. If you do not have someone listening or giving you immediate feedback, you might stray and lose track. The result can be very boring. You might also become self-conscious of your mistakes. Unless you are a good editor, it will be hard to correct later.

Now for a bit of techie talk to make our video look as good as a biography produced for TV. There are some pitfalls to avoid. You should have a tripod. Don't try to emulate music video techniques. Handheld is for those with MUCH experience, pun intended. Keep your point of view steady by locking your camera onto a tripod. It makes zooming and close-ups smoother. I don't like to overdo close-ups but accept that some variety is important, even if someone is just a talking head. And keep your eye on the viewfinder, never relying on automatic focus. If your subject moves even a bit, the automatic focus can drift and your subject will be fuzzy-looking.

You also need good lighting and a good microphone to make a video look professional. DO NOT USE the BUILT-IN MIKE. Your camcorder's microphone is simply not adequate. People looking at your video will be disappointed if the sound is muffled or seems far away. Make sure your camera has an input for an external microphone.

I once was hired to correct audio which sounded like it was drowned by the air conditioner. It was an impossible job and that day's recording was lost. That problem arose because the person behind the camera did not plug his headphones into the camera jack and didn't hear the loud background noise. The omni-directional built-in mike is not exactly like our ears, which can edit out extraneous noises. A mike cannot discriminate between the noisy sounds of the cars and buses going by and your voice.

"It sounded fine but turned out very noisy," said one client. Don't go by your ears. You must use a camera with an input for an external microphone. If you have made videos, you know about bad sound and have been surprised that the voice of the person behind the camera is three times louder than the person being photographed. Buy a camcorder that has a mike input and then use a unidirectional mike on a tripod or a

lavalier or lapel mike attached to your camera. I prefer using a microphone on a stand, aimed close enough to the speaker but out of frame.

There is a secret to making professional documentaries - good lighting. What distinguishes the weekend video from a professional job is a well-lit setting. Your subject should be comfortably seated and a strong central light focused on him or her. I like to keep the shades drawn and let the artificial lighting brighten the room. If you do not have any lighting equipment, here's an inexpensive way to get around the problem. Most large hardware stores sell construction lights on stands -you know, those 5-foot high yellow lighting stands which are used at night by construction crews. Get yourself a 1000-watt construction light set; they have two lights on a stand and can individually be shifted in any direction. One bright light can be adequate if it is powerful enough. If you can, add another light, pointed at the ceiling to help soften the shadows.

You can capture still photographs with your camcorder, or scan them for better results. Scanners have come down in price and many people use photography software like Photoshop to improve the images. Most broadcasters also use Photoshop for their documentaries. Editing is a challenge but, for those with a Macintosh, there is iMovie, the easiest and quite inexpensive beginner editing software on the market. The PC market has its own inexpensive editing software. Editing is a bit of an art and choosing the right transitions and fonts for your titles might take some experimenting. If you have the time and patience, you will find that making professional-looking videos is worth the effort. In my opinion, this can be a great project for a senior or anyone who is interested in their family's history.

*Len Scher is a legacy video maker and consultant. His web site is [www.biographydvd.com](http://www.biographydvd.com). He has written and produced award-winning documentaries for the CBC, National Film Board, Bravo, CityTV, and Discovery. His awards include the B'nai Brith Media League for Human Rights Award and Columbia University's Best International Program of the Year. Len can be reached at [tower@rogers.com](mailto:tower@rogers.com)*

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# The Jewish Population of Canada

By N.W. Goldstein, New York

This is an edited version of an article that was published in Berlin in July 1909 in the German language Zeitschrift für Demographie und Statistik der Juden ("Journal for Demography and Statistics of the Jews"). Translation by Henry Wellisch.

As in all modern countries of Jewish immigration, we can follow three phases. The first phase consists of the immigration of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, the second of the Germans, and the third of the East-European Jews; in the case of Canada, however, the immigration of German Jews was somewhat less than, for instance, in the United States.

The history of the Jews in Canada starts with the seven-year English-French war, and the first Jews entered Canadian territory shortly before the battle near Quebec and Montreal. Some of them participated in this difficult war as officers, and purchased their right of settlement with blood. In Amherst's army, which captured Montreal in 1760, there was a "commissioner," the English Jew Aaron Hart, who was born in London in 1724. Among other Jewish officers were Edmund de Cordova, Manamie Garcia and Isaac Miranda. They all settled in Montreal, and soon other Jewish immigrants came; among them we should mention Lazarus David, Uriel Moresco, Samuel Jacobs, Simon Levy, Fernandez de Fonseca, Abraham Franks, Andrew Hays, Jacob de Maarara, Joseph Bindona, Levy Salomons and Uriel Judah. Many of these served in the

military, others were in business. Lazarus David occupied a special position in the colony; he was a landed proprietor and also an influential politician.

New elements flowed into the country and the opportunity arose to organize all Jews in an association. In the year 1768 an organization under the name "Shearith Israel" was established, which followed the Sephardic tradition. In the year 1846 several Jewish families from Poland arrived in Montreal and founded an Ashkenazi synagogue. The discovery of gold in British Columbia in 1857 led to the immigration of several families to Victoria. They formed a close-knit colony and erected a synagogue. Similar settlements arose in many other places in Canada. Jews settled in Quebec [City?] shortly after the end of the British-French war.

The newest immigration from Eastern Europe, which begins with the year 1881, has enlarged all the existing settlements and brought into existence hundreds more.

Table 1 shows the state of the Jewish population according to the different censuses.

TABLE 1

Provinces	Census 1871		Census 1881		Census 1891		Census 1901	
	Total Pop.	Jews	Total Pop.	Jews	Total Pop.	Jews	Total Pop.	Jews
British Columbia	36,247	-	49,459	104	98,173	277	1,786,657	554
Manitoba	18,995	-	65,954	33	152,506	743	255,211	1,497
New Brunswick	285,800	48	321,233	55	321,263	73	331,120	376
Nova Scotia	1,620,851	-	440,572	19	450,396	31	459,574	437
Ontario	1,191,516	518	1,923,228	1,193	2,114,321	2,501	2,182,947	5,321
Prince Edward Island	94,021	-	108,891	-	109,078	1	103,259	17
Quebec	1,191,516	549	1,359,027	989	1,188,535	2,703	1,648,898	7,498
The Territories	-	-	56,446	-	98,967	85	211,649	701
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,635,024</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>4,324,810</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>4,833,239</b>	<b>6,414</b>	<b>5,371,315</b>	<b>16,401</b>

The growth of the entire population and that of the Jewish population occurred differently. While the entire population during the years 1871-1901 grew by 1.5%, the Jewish population during the same period grew by 14.7%. Even stronger was the growth of the Jewish population starting in 1901, and since we do not have any official sources, we have to use the *London Jewish Yearbook*. According to this, [the number of] Jews living in Canada was as follows:

in the year 1903	16,432
in the year 1904	22,500
in the year 1905	30,000
in the year 1906	40,000
in the year 1907	50,000
in the year 1908	60,000

The surplus of births, or natural growth, is of course only a small part of the reason for this strong increase in the

number of Canadian Jews. The main factor is the immigration from the countries of Eastern Europe. The growth of the Jewish population for the last 5 years exceeds that of the previous years by 2.9%, the result being that the increase is taking on greater dimensions.

We now want to investigate the Jewish population according to provinces and districts. According to the censuses of 1891 and 1901, all eight provinces have a sizable Jewish population. The majority, 78.16%, is located in two provinces, namely those with the largest population, Quebec and Ontario. This is not an accident, but quite natural when one observes the two tendencies of Jewish immigration, namely the tendency to concentrate in cities, [and in particular those] with a large population.

When we look at the distribution of the Jewish population in the districts, we can observe a gradual growth in them.

Districts of the province of Ontario	Jewish population in censuses			
	1871	1881	1891	1901
1. Addington	-	24	22	10
2. Algoma	-	1	15	45
3. Brant	1	9	5	2
4. Brockville	-	-	9	24
5. Bruce	1	-	-	2
6. Cornwall & Stormont	-	24	52	61
7. Dundas	-	-	-	8
8. Elgin	-	6	9	14
9. Essex	1	5	27	176
10. Frontenac	6	-	4	5
11. Glengarry	58	35	26	27
12. Grey	14 - 16	1	-	28
13. Haldimand & Morick	1	-	4	8
14. Halton	-	-	4	2
15. Hamilton, City	131	177	316	493
16. Hastings	-	21	27	30
17. Huron	6	6	-	8
18. Kent	2	22	24	11
19. Kingston, City	12	22	39	128
20. Lambton	7	27	42	8
21. Lanark	3	31	32	30
22. Leeds & Greenville	28	12	17	29
23. Lincoln & Niagara	10	24	15	30
24. London	35	47	144	206
25. Middlesex	1	1	6	14

Districts of the province of Ontario	Jewish population in censuses			
	1871	1881	1891	1901
26. Muskoka & Parry Sound	-	-	-	20
27. Nippissing	-	-	20	139
28. Norfolk	-	4	2	4
29. Ontario	-	14	9	10
30. Ottawa, City	-	20	46	398
31. Oxford	9	4	8	1
32. Peel	-	-	-	1
33. Perth	2	-	5	11
34. Peterborough	-	1	7	12
35. Prescott	9	27	5	31
36. Prince Edward	-	-	-	2
37. Renfrew	4	15	9	8
38. Russel	-	18	19	38
39. Simcoe	11	16	15	58
40. Toronto	157	584	1,425	3,038
41. Waterloo	1	5	17	20
42. Welland	7	7	2	1
43. Wellington	-	4	21	34
44. Wentworth	1	2	3	25
45. York.	4	18	15	68
46. Bothwell	-	-	1	-
47. Carleton	-	9	1	-
48. Durham	-	-	2	-
49. Grenville	3	-	6	-
50. Lennox	1	-	19	-
51. Victoria	6	-	3	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>2,501</b>	<b>5,321</b>

Districts of the Province of Quebec	Jewish population in censuses			
	1871	1881	1891	1901
1. Argenteuil	-	11	6	2
2. Bagot	-	-	-	8
3. Beauce	-	-	-	1
4. Beauharnois	-	2	-	5
5. Bertier	-	-	-	3
6. Brome	-	-	-	4
7. Chambly & Vercheres	5	-	-	23
8. Champlain	-	-	-	1
9. Chicoutimi & Saguenay	-	-	-	2

Districts of the Province of Quebec	Jewish population in censuses			
	1871	1881	1891	1901
10. Compton	-	-	14	16
11. Drummond & Athabaska	-	-	1	3
12. Gaspé	9	15	19	11
13. Hochelaga	7	3	16	108
14. Huntingdon	-	6	7	8
15. Jaques Cartier	-	-	5	41
16. Joliette	-	-	10	18
17. Labelle	-	-	-	28
18. Lapairie & Napierville	-	-	-	3
19. Laval	-	3	-	3
20. Levis	-	-	1	1
21. Maisonneuve	-	-	-	156
22. Montreal	409	811	2,457	6,597
23. Nicolet	-	-	-	8
24. Pontiac	2	1	1	12
25. Quebec	81	47	45	265
26. Richelieu	1	12	-	4
27. Richmond & Wolfe	6	-	8	12
28. Rimouski	-	-	-	1
29. Rouville	-	-	15	1
30. St. Jean & Herville	-	-	11	11
31. Shefford	-	4	-	1
32. Sherbrooke	-	20	27	66
33. Stanstead	5	8	5	2
34. Temiscouata	-	-	-	16
35. Terrebonne	-	-	1	31
36. Trois Riviers & St. Maurice	17	14	-	20
37. Veaudreuil	-	-	1	6
38. Chateaugay	-	-	7	-
39. L'Assomption	-	-	2	-
40. Mississquoi	1	7	8	-
41. Ottawa, County	-	3	32	-
42. St. Hyacinte	-	8	4	-
43. Megantic	1	2	-	-
44. Soulangers	1	11	-	-
45. Maskinonge	-	1	-	-
46. Jamaska	3	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>7,498</b>

**Jewish Population in Other Canadian Provinces,  
1901 Census**

<b>British Columbia</b>	
Burrard	210
Victoria	168
Yale & Caribou	132
<u>Other districts</u>	<u>44</u>
Total	554

<b>Manitoba</b>	
Brandon	78
Lisgar	126
Winnipeg	1,145
<u>Other districts</u>	<u>148</u>
Total	1,497

<b>New Brunswick</b>	
Northumberland	38
St. John, City	283
<u>Other districts</u>	<u>55</u>
Total	376

<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	
Queens	11
<u>Other districts</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	17

**Jewish Population in Other Canadian Provinces,  
1901 Census**

<b>Nova Scotia</b>	
Cape Breton	184
Halifax, City	148
Yarmouth	28
<u>Other districts</u>	<u>77</u>
Total	437

The increase of the Jewish population of Canada has occurred in two directions: one in the direction of diffusion, that is, the growth of settlements; secondly the direction of concentration, that is, growth of the population in the existing settlements. According to the tables of the census in 1871 there were 46 larger main Jewish settlements, in 1881 there were 69, in 1891 there were 87 and in 1901 there were 119. In the period between 1871- 1891, Jews founded 73 new main settlements in Canada.

Apart from the above-mentioned urban settlements, there exist also a number of agricultural settlements in Canada, which are located in the Northwest Territories. The first Jewish agricultural colony was founded in 1884 by the London Mansion House Committee and consisted of 30 families. They received for free the land, the inventory, and the necessary food supplies for an extended period. However, the colonists were soon discouraged and returned to the cities. The reason for this was the disadvantageous location of the colony relative to the railroad, so that it was not possible to find a market for the produce.

With the second big wave of Russian immigrants in the years 1891-92, however, new elements came to Canada who were more favourably inclined to settlements. This new movement found support in the plans of Baron de Hirsch. In the year 1892 he finalized his plan to settle some of the immigrants in the Northwest Territories. He handed over this project to the "Young Men's Hebrew Benevolent Society" in Montreal, which purchased the land. In the beginning there were 49 families in the colony, but soon this grew by 24 more families. The 73 farmers received 160 acres, that is, a total of 11,680 acres.

The colonists were equipped with supplies and animals for three years. However, after three years had gone by and \$50,000 had been spent, the managers of the afore-mentioned society decided not to make further advances. From now on the colony was supposed to be on its own. Since the colonists did not see a possibility to continue on their own, most of them abandoned the colony and moved to the city. However, during the following years 28 other new families settled in the Hirsch colony, and today they are in a relatively good position. Their main crop is wheat.

The colony Wapella [now in Saskatchewan] was founded by 20 Jewish families in the year 1894. The colonists were in possession of their own means and did not require support. This colony is making good progress.

A third colony is located in Oxbow in easterly Assiniboia [now in Saskatchewan]. Since 1900 there are 14 families located there.