



# שם טוב SHEM TOV

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

VOLUME XXIV No. 2

June 2008 Tamuz 5768

## THE KAMINKER STORY

by David and Sandy Kaminker of Toronto  
(with contribution from Harold Halpern of Buffalo N.Y.)

A wonderful adventure began in Vienna, Austria on May 18, 1998. A group of Kaminkers with spouses and friends went to the shtetls of Koslov, Konich, Pomuran and Rohaten in the Ukraine to trace their ancestral roots and to get a taste of how the ancestors lived, all the more to appreciate their roots and the values passed on. From then on, Kaminker meetings (reunions) have taken place every 2 years starting in Argentina, then Toronto, France, Israel, and Los Angeles, with the next to take place in Italy in 2009.

The first stimulus for the Toronto/Buffalo members who were descendants of Avrom and Frima Kaminker who had left the shtetl at the end of the 19th century was a history given to Min Saunders in 1972 from her cousin, Mary Glass. The history was quite complete and went well back to the 19th century. Unbeknownst to the North American Kaminkers, there was a thriving Kaminker clan in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in France, and in Israel. By sheer coincidence, Robert and Claude Kaminker of France and Alberto and Cora Kaminker of Argentina met in Switzerland in connection with their respective employment. They become close friends. Alberto often looks in phone books when he travels. When visiting the U.S., he found his North American family by a random phone call to Ron Kaminker who put him in touch with his father's cousins in Buffalo. In 1997, Alberto and his family decide to visit the families of Avrom and Frima in Toronto and Buffalo, and informed Robert and Claude from France who joined in. The gathering in Buffalo led to an exchange of family information and a tentative decision to plan a trip to the shtetls of our families.

At about the same time, Ron Kaminker from Los Angeles and Ralph Halpern from Buffalo were doing significant research into the family and preparing a family history. Each year, Ralph publishes and circulates a family history with updated information.

Ron Kaminker, a financial analyst in L.A. has found many cousins using random Internet searches and databases on the JewishGen website ([www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)). He once discovered a previously unknown family branch and added 80 new relatives to his family tree in 4 hours. In 1998, Ron visited an elderly Kaminker Holocaust survivor in Sweden. It was the first contact she had had with a Kaminker since the War. The meet-

ing was incredibly moving for the two strangers.

In the U.S., DNA testing has been done on Robert Kaminker from France to confirm his ancestry.

The memorable impressions and the warmth of meeting new family and being together with family at each reunion are truly very exciting and moving.

A core group of about twenty, mainly from Toronto/ Buffalo, Robert and Claude from France, and Alberto and Cora from Argentina, has made it their goal for the reunions to continue. The host(s) of each designated country plans a 3-4 day program of sightseeing, meals, and searching out as many Kaminkers as possible to attend. Here are some of the highlights of the reunions: in Buenos Aires, we met 60 Kaminkers who greeted us with so many kisses as if

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Programs organized by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto)

Unless otherwise noted, programs take place at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue - 470 Glencairn Ave.

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

Non-member fee: \$5.00 per meeting  
(exception: spouses accompanying members)

Mark your calendars for JGS Toronto meetings:

**Wednesday, September 24, 2008**

**Wednesday, November 5, 2008**

*Holocaust Education Week* programme presented jointly with Beth Lida Synagogue, to be held at Beth Lida (Gilgorn Avenue, Toronto). Guest speaker: Jerrold Landau

**Wednesday, November 26, 2008**

**Wednesday, December 17, 2008**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2009**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2009**

**Wednesday, March 25, 2009**

**Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

**Wednesday, May 27, 2009**

**Wednesday, June 24, 2009 - Breakthroughs and Year-End Meeting**

*For further details on all programmes, visit our website at [www.jgstoronto.ca](http://www.jgstoronto.ca)*

## We Welcome A New Member to Our Society

Sidney Moscoe

### ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by August 2008 for the Fall 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 91006, 2901 Bayview Ave., Toronto, Ontario M2K 1H0.

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The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) was founded in 1986 and currently has about 200 members. Membership costs \$36 per calendar year, \$18 for students. 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 goal of the Society is 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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### *The Kaminker Story* - Cont'd from page 1

they had known us their entire lives; Toronto attracted 300 people of all ages and from many parts of the world. We had a large committee which worked on it for 1 ½ years; in France, we met a woman who was a child survivor and only had family photo; in Israel, many Kaminkers from the Soviet Union found others they didn't know who were also living in Israel; in Los Angeles, there were 2nd cousins who met for the first time. Also, 5th in line cousins and other complete family strangers took a chance and came out to meet family. We had a family chart that stretched over three walls of the hotel hospitality suite and included over 1,000 names going back seven generations.

Some of our 4-day reunions have continued for those who chose extended travel of two weeks, a very unusual, special situation of cousins spending so much time together.

There have been times Toronto Kaminkers have been contacted through the internet and by phone calls.

The reunions have made us aware of many distinguished Kaminkers and as well as have given us the opportunity to meet many:

1. Simone Signoret Kaminker - French actress and 1<sup>st</sup> cousin to Robert Kaminker
2. Shlomo (Kaminker) Nakdimon - Israeli author on the destruction of Iraq and press advisor to Begin on the Egypt peace treaty
3. Sarah Kaminker - author of *Walking Tours of Jerusalem* and member of Jerusalem city council when Teddy Kollek was mayor
4. Eytan Fox (Sarah's son) - Movie Director, *Walking on Water*
5. Nathan Cummings (changed his name from Kaminker), President Reagan's Jewish Affairs Advisor and his appointment as Ambassador to Austria
6. Alberto Kaminker - Argentinean Diplomat, Economist
7. Georges Kaminker (father of Robert from France) – translator at the UN first General Assembly in London and then in New York and simultaneous translator at the Nuremberg Trials
8. Robert Kaminker - had a long career as a simultaneous translator at the UN
9. Andre Kaminker - brother to Georges and father to Simone Signoret spent the war years at the service of De Gaulle in the Free French Forces
10. Benjamin Kaminker - Toronto architect of original Mt. Sinai Hospital on Yorkville Ave. and architect and past president of Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue
11. Marina Kaminker - living in Israel, formerly of the Soviet Union - concert pianist. Her sister runs an opera company in Israel
12. Dimitri Kaminker - artist from Russia was visiting professor at York University and exhibited his sculpture at the downtown Toronto Sculpture Garden.

It is our hope to always carry the Kaminker name with dignity, pride and honour. An idea of finding our roots and family has become a success.

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## JGS Front and Centre at the Second Annual Jewish Mosaic Festival

by Harvey Glasner

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JGS had a significant presence at the Jewish Mosaic Festival June 1<sup>st</sup> at the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre. Our own Bill Gladstone was there for a book signing.

Bill, who writes for the Canadian Jewish News, worked for more than 20 years on this, his latest book, **One Hundred Years in Canada: the Rubinoff-Naftolin Family Tree** (Now & Then Books) a 381-page treasure trove on a single, though greatly extended, family.

The illustrated history was launched in early May before about 125 delighted members of the sprawling Rubinoff-Naftolin family, which split into five distinct branches. Subclans include Cohens, Patliks, Slovins, Edsons and variations on Rubinoff (Rubinov, Rubin, Rubinowitz).

The book contains 600 photographs culled from family collections, and brims with dozens of highly detailed genealogical charts, birth, death and marriage records, maps, clippings, ship manifests and other archival documents.

JGS volunteers (Harvey Glasner, David Trost, Henry Wellich) manned computers that were logged on to popular sites such as [www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org) and [www.stevemorse.com](http://www.stevemorse.com) to illustrate to visitors some of the techniques and methodologies of conducting genealogical research.

JGS took a booth at the Festival as a means of sharing with members of our Jewish community the lifelong enjoyment one can get by taking up genealogy as a hobby.

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## Spielberg's Shoah Foundation Survivor Interviews

The 50,000+ survivor interviews conducted by Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation from 1994 to 2005 were turned over to the University of Southern California in January 2006. An index to the collection, now known as the Shoah Foundation Institute Visual History Archive, can be found at [http://tc.usc.edu/vhitec/\(blf5kv2iutqkvur5apj0nnu4\)/default.aspx](http://tc.usc.edu/vhitec/(blf5kv2iutqkvur5apj0nnu4)/default.aspx)

This Testimony Catalogue is searchable by the interviewees' first and last names, cities of birth, ages, camps and hiding places, and many other variables.

The full Visual History Archive can be accessed at institutions in the United States, Germany, and Australia:

<http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/arc/libraries/sfa/index.php>

*From JewishGen Galicia Special Interest Group Digest*

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## 160,000 New Record Indices Searchable on JRI-Poland

by Stanley Diamond

On behalf of The Board of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland

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**J**ewish Records Indexing-Poland is delighted to announce the uploading of one of the largest batches of new data in our history!

### What's new?

More than 160,000 new entries have been added to the JRI-Poland database from 80 towns. The entries include data from 43 towns in our database for the first time as well as new data for later years from previously indexed towns which have had other data in our database.

The record indices are from 15 Shtetl CO-OPS (records indexed by volunteers from LDS/Mormon microfilms), 60 Polish State Archives (PSA) projects (data previously indexed under the PSA project and now \*finally\* funded and able to go on the database), and five projects carried out and donated to JRI-Poland by CRARG (Czestochowa-Radomsko Area Research Group).

While announcements about individual projects or groups of projects will be made in the coming days by members of the JRI-Poland volunteer family, it is particularly meaningful to mention that there were 8,700 additions to the Warsaw Cemetery database, which now has more than 65,000 entries.

Note: The Online Status column in the Your Town pages has not yet been updated and so the new data is not yet reflected.

JRI-Poland now has indices to almost 3.4 million Polish Jewish records in its searchable database [www.jri-poland.org](http://www.jri-poland.org).

### Data not yet online

While we are excited and proud of these important new searchable resources for our researchers, the fact remains that we still have hundreds of thousands of entries from more than 100 towns (indexed under the Polish State Archives project) that cannot be uploaded for searching because funding to cover the costs of the indexing has not yet been completed for these individual town projects. In fact, in some cases, this data has been available for more than five years. A list of some of the not yet fully-funded towns is at the end of this message.

### Before you start searching

We know you will be anxious to start searching the new data. But, before doing so, please remember...

You can search by surname and town or surname and geographical area. For hints on maximizing your search results by using geographic coordinates, please refer to: <http://www.jri-poland.org/searchpageshints.htm>.

Do **\*\*not\*\*** search by Town name only as this will not generate results!

### Special thanks

As always, special thanks goes to JRI-Poland's Database Manager Michael Tobias, as well as to all Shtetl CO-OP Coordina-

tors and Volunteers, Archive Coordinators, Town Leaders and treasured Contributors who have helped the JRI-Poland database continue to grow.

### Towns for which there is data not yet online:

As mentioned above, there are more than 100 towns for which JRI-Poland has data that cannot be uploaded because of the lack of funding. Most are listed below. If you want to know more about the status of your town, go to the "Your Town" link on the JRI-Poland website at [www.jri-poland.org](http://www.jri-poland.org) and contact the Town Leader for your town. If a Town Leader is not listed online, contact the Archive Coordinator under whose Archive project the town falls.

If information for your town is not shown or if you cannot reach the Town Leader or Archive Coordinator, please write to <[questions@jri-poland.org](mailto:questions@jri-poland.org)>.

Annopol	Minsk Mazowiecki
Biezun	Mogielnica
Bobowa	Nadarzyn
Bodzanow	Nowe Miasto nad Pilica
Bodzentyn	Nowy Sacz
Bogoria	Olkusz
Brzeziny	Pabianice
Checiny	Pinczow
Daleszyce	Piotrkow Kujawski
Dobra (Turek)	Piszczac
Dobrzyn nad Wisla	Plock
Drobin	Pruchnik
Glowno	Przedborz
Grojec	Przytyk
Karczew	Raciaz
Konskie	Radom
Kowal	Radoszyce
Krasnystaw	Radymno
Krzyszow	Radziejow
Lask	Rawa Mazowiecka
Leczna	Rzeszow
Lopuszno	Serock
Lubien Kujawski	Skierniewice

**COMING THIS SUMMER!**  
**28<sup>th</sup> IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy**  
**LEARN-LISTEN-SEE-HEAR.**

Jump on the bandwagon and join genealogy colleagues from all over the world as we explore the fascination of Jewish Genealogy.

*Co-hosted by the IAJGS, the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, and the Illiana Jewish Genealogical Society, the conference will be held at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile from August 17-22, 2008. For more on the over 150 sessions by more than 100 speakers and registering, see [www.chicago2008.org](http://www.chicago2008.org).*

**SHARE THE EXCITEMENT OF** Randy Schoenberg's keynote address: Recovering Nazi-Looted Art- A Genealogist's Tale. **HONOR** Susan King, recently retired founder of JewishGen at our opening reception, co-hosted by the IAJGS and JewishGen, an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage -- A Living Memorial to the Holocaust; sign a guest book in her tribute! All this on Sunday, August 17.

**HOW TO GET STARTED.** Terrific beginner's workshop on Sunday, August 17. Plus many other presentations of benefit to beginners.

**SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC AREAS.** Learn from experts on Austria, Canada, Courland, Czechoslovakia, Galicia, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Jamaica, Latin America, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, U.S. and

**160,000 New Record Indices - Cont'd from previous page**

Sobienie Jeziory	Wielun
Sulejow	Wisznice
Szczercow	Wloszczowa
Szrensk	Wodzislaw
Tarnow	Wojslawice
Tuszyn	Zakroczym
Uchanie	Zarnow
Warka	Zawiercie

Reminder: The Online Status column in the Your Town pages has not yet been updated to show this newly searchable data.

How to make a donation

To support the indexing of your town or help JRI-Poland's efforts to index Jewish records from all areas of Poland, please go to [www.jri-poland.org/visa.htm](http://www.jri-poland.org/visa.htm).

JRI-Poland is an independent non-profit tax-exempt Organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Under special arrangement, the JRI-Poland web site [www.jri-poland](http://www.jri-poland), mailing list, and database are hosted by JewishGen. JRI-Poland data is displayed on JewishGen as a service to researchers.

Ukraine. Plus specific programs on genealogical research in Chicago and the Midwest.

**DNA AND GENETICS.** Become more knowledgeable about the relevance of DNA and genetics for genealogists. Presentations include a mini-seminar sponsored by Genzyme Corp, focusing on Jewish genetic diseases and how genealogists can play a role in identifying family medical history, DNA basics.

**HOLOCAUST RESEARCH.** Enhance your ability to search for family displaced or lost in the Shoah in sessions on the International Tracing Service, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Jewish refugees in Shanghai.

**RESEARCH ON AND OFF-LINE.** Discover how to research immigration and naturalization, how to use libraries and archives, and how to best utilize on- and off-line resources.

**OTHER PROGRAMMING.** Broaden your horizons with other programs: organize successful family reunions; family newsletters; write your family history; citations made simple; scanning and restoring old photographs; forensic genealogy; Sephardic ancestry; and "Fire! Fire! - Prioritizing Your Valuables in an Emergency with Carol Baird, forced to evacuate her home on short notice during the recent fires in Southern California. (Her home was not destroyed.)

**FILM FESTIVAL.** Films relating to Jewish genealogy showing all week long, included FREE in your general registration

**BREAKFASTS, LUNCHES AND COMPUTER WORKSHOPS.** Each is on a specific topic. They are listed on the conference website <[www.chicago.2008.org](http://www.chicago.2008.org)>, along with the complete program and complete conference information.

**BANQUET.** An exciting close to the conference on Thursday evening (August 21). Celebrate the winners of the IAJGS Annual Achievement Awards. Enjoy a wonderful entertainer. Catch up with last minute networking.

**28th IAJGS International Conference  
on Jewish Genealogy in Chicago  
August 17-22, 2008  
Conference and Hotel registration  
are now open!  
[www.chicago2008.org](http://www.chicago2008.org)**

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## Update on Digital Photography at Toronto's Old Jewish Cemeteries

by David Trost

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In 2007, Elaine Slavens and I initiated a project to photograph and index the two oldest Jewish cemeteries in Toronto. In 2008, Elaine Slavens took on the responsibility of coordinating the digital photography project for JGS Toronto. In April 2008, JOWBR of JewishGen posted about 1,190 digital photographs of the *matzevahs* (headstones) in the Jones Avenue and Pape Avenue cemeteries.

The Jones Avenue Cemetery, <http://jonesavenuecemetery.com/>, is located between 460 and 482 Jones Avenue, south of Danforth Avenue in Toronto. It was established in 1883 and consecrated in 1896. Presently, the Jones Avenue Cemetery is administered by Beth Tzedec Congregation. There are two sections within the Jones Avenue Cemetery, and the *Chevra Kadisha Chesed Shel Emes* section occupies the southern part of the cemetery. All burial records are on file at the Dawes Road Cemeteries; however, a fire destroyed some of the records, leaving some graves unidentifiable. Harvey Glasner submitted 577 photographs to JOWBR of the 581 burials recorded in this section. The Goel Tzedec Congregation acquired the northern portion of the Jones Avenue Cemetery in 1919, Goel Tzedec now being a part of Beth Tzedec Congregation. Elaine Slavens has submitted 361 photographs of the 379 burials recorded in this section.

The Pape Avenue/Holy Blossom Cemetery is located on the east side of Pape Avenue, south of Gerrard Street East; it was established in 1849 and closed in 1930. In September 1849, Judah G. Joseph, an optician and jeweller from Exeter, England, and Abraham Nordheimer, a piano maker from Bavaria, purchased a patch of land 60 feet wide and 400 feet deep that was then on the outskirts of Toronto. The burial of Joseph's son Samuel in 1850 is believed to be the first Jewish burial in Toronto although no marker remains. Custodianship of this cemetery was later transferred to Holy Blossom Temple in 1856. This cemetery contains the graves of many of the founders and early notables of the Toronto Jewish community.

The languages on the stones reflect the diverse international background of the early Jewish community in Toronto. Some of the early inscriptions are only in Hebrew, others are entirely English, and a few from proud emigrants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire are in German, sometimes with quotations from Schiller. The majority of the inscriptions are bilingual with varying amounts of both English and Hebrew. The headstone of Solomon Jacobs, who served Holy Blossom as Rabbi from 1901 to 1920, is all in English except for the traditional Hebraic formula for a man of learning, "*zeher tzaddik livrakhah*". Strangely, the Nordheimer family members who established the cemetery are not buried at this location.

Elaine Slavens has single-handedly indexed all 253 photographs in the Pape Avenue Cemetery against a spreadsheet of surname and burial location. Because of the age of the cemetery, many of the stones were buried or difficult to decipher as a result of erosion; therefore, only 253 of the 293 are posted on JOWBR.

Some headstones are engraved on both sides. When we photograph a headstone, we generally publish the photograph of the side that is most descriptive since only a single photograph may be displayed on JOWBR for internet retrieval. JOWBR has a facility for the viewer to zoom and pan on an individual photograph. Occasionally we have merged two photographs into a single digital image but this may result in some loss of detail. For the technical cognoscenti, photographs are usually taken at medium resolution which may result in a JPG image of over one megabyte in size. To conserve space, make retrieval faster, and to meet JOWBR standards, all the digital photographs are resized to a standard format so that they are each less than one half megabyte in size.

Although we have collectively spent hundreds of hours photographing, sorting, and indexing, we assume that there will be some errors or omissions in our work. Should you discover any discrepancies, please forward your remarks to [info@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:info@jgstoronto.ca) and Elaine Slavens will review them. Also, please remember that volunteers are always welcome. Please contact Elaine if you are interested.

Reference: March 2004 *Shem Tov*: "An Old Cemetery Reveals Interesting History"

### Overwhelming Response to Toronto Star Column!

by Harvey Glasner

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The Stuart Laidlaw column in *The Toronto Star* (April 19, 2008) highlighting our Society's cemetery project has resulted in a large number of offers to volunteer.

Subsequently, the Cemetery Committee held a meeting at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue on May 8<sup>th</sup> to organize the volunteers in photographing headstones at the Dawes Road Cemetery.

25 volunteers showed up to this meeting that was run by Cemetery Committee Coordinator, Elaine Slavens; President, Shelley Stillman; and Board Member, David Trost.

A comprehensive seminar was delivered on how to properly photograph tombstones, on cemetery etiquette and, most importantly, on the process of properly transcribing records to spreadsheets.

Volunteers offered their services for a variety of reasons. Typically, people are interested in genealogy. Some volunteers are professional photographers and are looking for projects of interest while others have an abiding interest in history.

Dawes Road Cemetery has over 11,000 burials. With the help of our volunteers, the Committee hopes to have the data to JOWBR of JewishGen by the end of this summer. With the completion of the Dawes Road project, JGS Toronto should become the biggest contributor in the world to JOWBR. Good work, Cemetery Committee!!

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## Consecrated Ground was Essential for the First Jews Who Came to Toronto and Stayed

by *Stuart Laidlaw, Faith and Ethics Reporter*

*Reprinted with permission of the Toronto Star, Apr 19, 2008*

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**W**edged between a community centre, turn-of-the-century housing and a playground sits a solemn place, long disused but still cared for – and born, paradoxically, of both personal tragedy and a community's optimism.

Holy Blossom Cemetery, previously known as Pape Avenue Cemetery or simply Jews' Cemetery, marks the spot where Toronto's burgeoning Jewish community began to assert itself almost 160 years ago.

"The founding of a cemetery is a significant move," says University of Toronto professor Harold (Hesh) Troper, an expert on local Jewish history. "You would think that the founding of a synagogue was more important."

A Jewish community does not need a synagogue to practise the faith but, in order to properly bury its dead; a consecrated cemetery is a must.

This weekend, the Toronto area's Jewish community of almost 200,000 begins Passover, marking the Jewish exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. In contrast, there were only three dozen or so Jews in the city in 1849 when two businessmen optimistically bought a plot of land east of town for a cemetery.

Until immigrants Judah Joseph and Abraham Nordheimer put down their £20 for the land on what is now Pape (just south of Gerrard), few Jews who came to Toronto seemed to stay long. Troper says the pattern for immigrants then was to make some money and be on their way, and Jews were no exception. But by buying this land, Joseph, a jeweller, and Nordheimer, a piano maker, effectively declared that they had found a home after travelling across the globe to build a new life.

As Troper puts it: "They had finally got to a place and said, 'We're here.'"

There was another emotion at work that was perhaps as important. Joseph had an ailing son, Samuel, and the closest Jewish cemeteries were in Montreal and Buffalo, making the Jewish requirement that a body be buried within one day difficult for a family in 1840s Toronto. Joseph wanted a consecrated place to bury Samuel when the time came.

That time came in 1850 and it is believed Samuel was the first person to be buried in the cemetery.

Ellen Scheinberg, director of the Ontario Jewish Archives, says Pape Cemetery is a key part of the local community's history. Not only were all the first Jewish families in the city buried there, but it is also the resting place for many of the community's most prominent residents who came later.

The location leads too much head-scratching, however. There's no synagogue nearby and the neighbourhood is better known historically as Leslieville. Today, it is an extension of East Chinatown.

"People ask, what are these (graves) doing here? The Jews aren't in east Toronto," Scheinberg says. "I get that all the time."

When Joseph and Nordheimer made their purchase, she says, the land was on the edge of town and available at a good

price. The city grew up around it. There was no effort to keep Jewish burials out of the city, she and Troper agree. Scheinberg notes the founders were prominent businessmen.

The site closed almost 70 years ago but still has visitors, says Doug Brown, groundskeeper and next-door neighbour to the cemetery for 50 years.

"We get busloads of school kids coming down to do rubbings," Brown says as he stands outside the cemetery's iron gates. "Visitors from out of town call up wanting to see a relative's grave."

Brown's job is to maintain the site, including extra care given to a couple of graves for families that have set up trusts to plant fresh flowers every spring. He knows the location of every tombstone and the personal history of many of the deceased.

Like a protective parent, he's never far away when visitors come through.

While none of the earliest tombstones survives – all that is known of Samuel Joseph's grave is that it was near the gate – the history in the local Jewish community can nonetheless be read in those that remain.

There are names and dates, of course, but there are also subtle hints about the community's identity. Birthplaces listed on the oldest stones include villages in England while Germany and Eastern Europe are on later ones. Eventually, Toronto is listed.

As well, some of the original stones are inscribed entirely in Hebrew or German, while later ones contain a mix of Hebrew, German and English.

The newest ones – from the 1940s, just before the cemetery closed – are entirely in English. That suggests the community was, by then, identifying as Canadian, not immigrant. One stone, near the front gate, has both a Star of David and a maple leaf.

For Troper, significance lies in what comes with building a cemetery. Even more important than the physical presence is the infrastructure that developed around it, he says.

People needed to be appointed to administer it, maintain it and to fundraise for it.

"You've got to deal with the dead, and you've got a community that builds up around that."

Once people start to work together – first to deal with the dead and then, perhaps, to deal with the consequences of death, such as providing for widows and children – institutions develop around which a synagogue is eventually established.

Toronto's first synagogue came almost a decade after the cemetery on Pape opened and soon took over responsibility for the cemetery.

As more Jewish immigrants moved to the city, the community became more diversified, Troper says, and new synagogues and cemeteries were started.

There are now 118 synagogues and congregations in the Toronto area and about 80 Jewish

*Cont'd on Page 9*

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## Eating Cannon Fodder Like Pigs

by Brian Cugelman

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**M**y family name is Cugelman, but historically, it was Kugelfresser. Although the spelling varied—Kugelman, Kugelfresser, Kugelfreser—my ancestors adopted Cugelman when they immigrated to Canada in the early 1900s. Nobody in the family has ever offered up a convincing reason for this name change, but after spending some time in Germany, I quickly realized what motivated this change.

Historically, my family members were European Jews who would have lived in the Prussian, Russian or Austrian/Hungarian Empire, but given the historical stability of the region, they probably lived in all three. Family accounts all point to Sosnowiec and research indicates they would have also lived in Bedzin. Most people assume the name originated from Yiddish, but evidence suggests it is rooted in German.

While living in Germany, I quickly learned how to make Germans laugh in any social gathering. All I'd have to do is tell them that my last name was Cugelman. Once they were chuckling, I'd tell them that historically, my family name was Kugelfresser. This would usually put them on the floor. It may be hard to imagine how a last name could provoke such a response, but the term *kugelfresser* is not just strange in German—it's outright absurd.

People who speak a little German or Yiddish normally assume the name means bullet maker, cake eater, or just ball eater, but the name Kugelfresser is composed of two words. First is the noun *kugel* which means a sphere or ball. For example, when buying ice cream in Germany, one would purchase a *kugel*, a scoop of ice cream. Historically, the term refers to the bullets used in muskets. These bullets were not bullets in the modern sense, but round balls that were stuffed down the barrel of a gun and mixed in with gun powder. The second word is *fresser*, which comes from the verb *fressen*, used for an animal eating. In English, the verb "to eat" is used for both people and animals, but in German, the verb *fressen* is a special verb reserved for animals; the only time you would apply it to humans is to insult or make fun of them. For example, in English, we use the expression "you're eating like a pig", and likewise, in German if you say someone is eating in the *fressen* sense, you're insinuating that they're eating like a pig or wild beast. Combined, these two words could be taken to mean "the act of eating balls like a pig".

On one occasion, I met a German literature student who actually recognized the term *kugelfresser* from historical texts dating back to the 1800s. She described *kugelfresser* as the front-line soldiers that were shot to death from cannon fodder, a mixture of small metal balls and rocks. On the battlefield, cannons were filled with cannon fodder and they would be shot at enemy lines in a shotgun-like manner. In this sense, *kugelfresser* describes how the bodies of soldiers reacted like animals as they were shot to bits from cannon fodder.

Nobody knows where the name comes from, so I'll have to put forward some theories to explain its origin. The first theory

is that the source of my last name is rooted in a combination of two factors: the introduction of last names during the 1800s and anti-Semitic attitudes towards European Jews. During this time, Napoleon assigned last names to individuals so that government institutions could store meaningful records about individuals. Imaging trying to operate a nation with first name records only! How would you dig up any records about any particular individual? The rationalism of the French Revolution caught on and this led to the imposition of last names across other European regions.

I am not sure when or where, but I suspect that my family received their last name from either the Prussian or Austro-Hungarian Empire. In both countries, last names were imposed, but in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, anti-Semitic attitudes were more prevalent. As a result, Jews were often forced to adopt insulting or derogatory last names. These derogatory last names not only served as an outlet for prejudice, but they also served as a way for local officials to extort bribes from Jews by forcing them to pay fees to change their last names. Ironically, when Jews paid to change their last names, they often chose high status last names. I believe this is why many Jewish last names include status words from nature such as gold, silver or mountain (*berg*), or high status names from historical Jewish tribes such Levi or Cohen.

My second theory is that the name was distributed to my ancestors during the 1800s; however, instead of being a derogatory name, it may have been given out as an honourable name to an esteemed war veteran or soldier. Every once in a while, Hollywood shows some superhero catching bullets with his teeth as the ultimate act of strength. It's possible that the name actually had a positive, hero-like meaning, suggesting the Kugelfressers were such tough soldiers that they ferociously ate bullets for breakfast.

Perhaps my family was too poor or too cheap to change our derogatory last name. Or perhaps they were great soldiers who earned it. I'm not sure I'll ever know, but it makes people laugh and what more could you want from a last name!



**Benjamin Kugelfresser**

## The Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean

by Harvey Glasner

For those researchers who have a penchant for the arcane and are planning a vacation to the Caribbean, an out of the ordinary side-trip would be exploring a Jewish cemetery. You might be astonished to come across the symbols of the pirate, the skull and crossbones, carved into a few of the tombstones!

Edward Bernard Glick, a retired professor of political science at Temple University, has been studying the exploits of Jewish Pirates such as Jean Lafitte. Lafitte, a Sephardic Jew (family name was originally Lefitto), was born in France in 1780 but migrated to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Here he took up the trade of a privateer, raiding Spanish ships. His two brothers fenced Jean's booty through their blacksmith shop in New Orleans. In 1814, the British sought his aid in their pending attack on New Orleans; however, he passed their plans to the Americans and helped General Andrew Jackson beat them in 1815. A grateful Jackson, not yet president, saw to it that Lafitte and his family became American citizens.

There is some belief that the Sephardi pirates turned to this nefarious trade in order to get revenge on the Spanish Catholics who expelled them from Spain in 1492. Six of Barbarossas' chief officers were Jewish!

Ed Kritzler, a New York writer and authority on Jamaica, wrote a book that will be released in October 2008, entitled *Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean*. One such pirate was Moses Cohen Henriques, who helped plan one of history's largest heists against Spain. In 1628, Henriques set sail with the Dutch West Indies Company's Admiral Piet Hein, whose hatred of Spain was fuelled by four years spent as a galley slave aboard a Spanish ship.

Henriques and Hein boarded Spanish ships off Cuba and seized shipments of New World gold and silver. Henriques established his own pirate island off the coast of Brazil and even though his role in the raids was known to the Spanish, he was never caught or tried.

Determining the exact number of Jewish pirates is difficult, according to Kritzler because many of them travelled as Conversos, or converts to Christianity, and practised their Judaism in secrecy.

### References:

*Jews of the Frontier* Rachel Simon, 1991

*Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean* Edward Kritzler, (book to be released in October, 2008)

*Who Was Jean Lafitte? New Orleans Most Dashing Pirate* Marjorie Dorfman, March 28, 2006

COMING SOON!

New & improved Jewish Genealogical Society  
of Canada (Toronto) website!  
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Jean Lafitte

### *Consecrated Ground* - Cont'd from page 7

schools. Other organizations such as the Canadian Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith and the fledgling Independent Canadian Jewish Conference also represent Jewish interests.

But cemeteries maintain their central role. There are 11 in the GTA, serving a variety of Jewish communities, conservative to secular. The burial rites, the shiva, all hail back to the old country. Practicing these rituals here, Troper says, is a mark that the culture has found a new home.

Take the uniquely Jewish practice of laying a stone on the grave of a loved one. (Brown ensures a supply is available around the cemetery.) There's no shortage of theories for why the stones are left – from warding off animals to providing a simple sign to others that someone still remembers the deceased. But for Troper, the stone's significance is that it's a long-standing Jewish tradition.

A child might see his father – perhaps years ago, in another time and country – lay a stone in memory of a lost relative. Now that child, grown up and with kids of his own, lays a stone at a cemetery in his new home.

"It becomes a bond through the generations," says Troper. "It connects you as a community, because this is something that Jews do."

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## Branching Out

by Elaine Cheskes

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### Tracing Our Jewish Roots: Selections from the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) Library Collection

Compiled by Elaine Cheskes

in Conjunction with the North York Central Library

**Tracing Our Jewish Roots is on display until Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008** at the North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge Street, 6th floor, the Gladys Allison Canadiana Room.

I have selected resources of interest from the library collection for the genealogist and the general community.

Highlights of the exhibit include historical texts that represent the culture of Jewish people from the shtetls of Eastern Europe, and materials that describe Jewish emigration to Canada with settlements from the Atlantic Provinces to the Pacific Coast.

Early Toronto Jewry comes alive with historical documents and photos of immigrant life.

In addition, the statistical records, reference material and maps pertaining to the Holocaust depict a bleak period of our history. Directories of Jewish Canadian Veterans of World War II who patriotically served our country are also on display.

Of great interest are the ancestral trees of notable families and significant journals of international genealogical societies.

Material from the exhibit may be borrowed only to be read in the Canadiana Room.



*Tracing Our Jewish Roots  
Compiled by Elaine Cheskes  
Photo by Miray Cheskes-Granovsky*

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### Getting Plugged In

The Toronto Public Library's website at [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca) and the Virtual Reference Library website at <http://vrl.torontopubliclibrary.ca> provide several databases that can be accessed from outside sources. The VRL is an online research and reference resource with a subject directory of internet sites, research guides and other digital resources.

The databases of the *Globe and Mail – Canada's Heritage from 1844*, and the *Toronto Star – Pages of the Past from 1894* may be accessed remotely with a valid Toronto Public Library card.

To access to the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* remotely:

1. Input TPL home page at [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca)
2. Click on Find articles in Magazines, Newspapers & more
3. Click on the 3<sup>rd</sup> option, Databases
4. Click on the desired title e.g.: *The Globe and Mail – Canada's Heritage from 1844*
5. Sign in using your Toronto Public Library card



### Internet Genealogy Training at the North York Central Library

Upgrade your internet genealogical skills! The Canadiana Department offers a one-hour training session, where a librarian teaches one or two individuals at a time. The instruction provides the internet skills required to access the Toronto Public Library's electronic genealogical resources. Discover the Virtual Reference Library. Explore Canadian, English and American census and vital records on the Ancestry Library Edition. Search for obituaries in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail* online. Examples from your own family are used in order to demonstrate these techniques; however, personal family research will not be done for you.

Training sessions are given on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. To book an appointment, sign up at the Reference Desk on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Canadiana Room, or call (416) 395-5623.

# That's My Family - A Canadian Genealogy Search Engine

*Eastman Genealogical Newsletter by Dick Eastman*

**A** new search tool searches genealogy and family history databases hosted by Canadian federal, provincial or territorial archives centres and libraries, as well as those of several commercial partners. "That's My Family," or "Voici Ma Famille," is free of charge and available in both French and English. It was launched and is maintained by Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) with support from Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the Council of Provincial and Territorial Archivists (CPTA) of Canada.

"That's My Family" hosts no data of its own. It is a search engine, similar to Google, that indexes data found on other sites. The difference is that "That's My Family" looks only at Canadian sites that contain genealogy information. As such, it can save you a lot of time; you do not have to search each site individually.

The databases that have been indexed include both free and for-pay sources. In the case of for-pay sites, clicking on a link in "That's My Family" may take the user to a sign-in page that asks for payment of a fee. The titles of these databases are marked with a dollar sign (\$). The searches are always free, but some sites may charge a fee before displaying all the details.

I used "That's My Family" for a bit to look up some of my French-Canadian ancestors. I found two different search mechanisms, logically named "Simple Search" and "Advanced Search." The site has one-page tutorials that explain the use of each.

The Simple Search lived up to its name: I entered the surname of Dubé and was rewarded with 242 results. The instructions state that not all the databases being searched treat accented characters in the same manner; so, the user should try such searches at least twice: once with the accents and once without. I searched for Dube (without the "é") and received 1,188 results. Some of those results were the same as those found in the earlier search for Dubé.

A quick switch to the Advanced Search allowed me to narrow my search. I was able to search by combinations of surname, first name, location, and more. I was able to find quite a few of my Dubé ancestors. I was especially impressed by the speed: this search engine is lightning fast!

The search pages are available in both French and English so that you can use the language you prefer. However, the searches cover pages in both languages and the results obtained might be in either language. While I was searching in English, many of the results pointed to pages written in French. After all, I was looking for French-speaking ancestors and the majority of records they left behind were in their language.

If you wish a copy of a document, you must contact the organization responsible for the particular database where you found the information. You never contact "That's My Family" since it is a search engine that points to data stored elsewhere. To access the needed organization's web site, you click on the

Title field in the results window or go to the Sources section.

All in all, this is a great resource for anyone looking for Canadian ancestors. I suspect I will use this time and time again. If you have Canadian ancestry, you probably will do the same.

"That's My Family," or "Voici Ma Famille," is available at <http://www.voicimafamille.info>.

My thanks to Guy Lamarche for telling me about this valuable new resource.

## Diaspora Museum Offers Genealogy Database

*by Henry Wellisch*

Jews can investigate their roots at a new digital database in Israel's Diaspora Museum. *Beit Hatefutsot* - The Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv has just unveiled a genealogy database now accessible on its intranet but slated to become available remotely through the institute's website ([www.bh.org.il](http://www.bh.org.il)).

"For 30 years *Beit Hatefutsot* has been collecting family trees, information on Jewish family surnames, history of communities, photos and films, musical clippings and information on terms and people," museum director Hasia Israeli said in a statement, adding that the new database will allow users "to be exposed to their personal story and the stories of the unique spectrum of the Jewish people".

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## Spotlight on Members and Friends

by Harvey Glasner

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*Are you interested in volunteering on a genealogy project? Would you like to get some ideas for a project of your own? In this column we will profile some members and friends of our Society, who, in addition to researching their own family trees, have undertaken projects of interest to the general community.*

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In the March 2008 issue of *Shem Tov*, I wrote a column entitled *Science and Serendipity*. In that column, I mentioned how I had chanced upon a reference to my wife's mother's family, the Goldfelds, through a casual reading of the Newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain.

Well, Toba Ajzenstat and David Price, two JGS Toronto members, unearthed some *gold* in my wife's Goldfeld research. By sheer coincidence, they were translating and transcribing birth and death records from Radom Guberneria (names, ages, and names of parents - as close as they can get to accuracy) taken from Mormon microfiche. Toba is focusing on the 1867 to 1877 records and David is working from 1826 on. They are doing this on behalf of JRI Poland.

Toba contacted me shortly after *Shem Tov* was published to tell me that she found the birth record of Aizek Goldfeld, my wife's grandfather. Remarkably, she also found a treasure trove of other records -- Aizek's sister, his father Nehemia, as well as Nehemia's father, spouses and children (going back to 1831).

Needless to say, my wife Adena was overwhelmed and most appreciative.

Thank you, David Price and Toba Ajzenstat!!



At the end of June, David Trost will be moving from Toronto to head west and join his family in Vancouver. David has for years been a tireless volunteer and member of the JGS Toronto Executive.

David has done a tremendous amount of work on behalf of the Cemetery Committee and as well has been a major influence in the redesign of our website (to be unveiled soon).

He has helped in photographing the Pape Ave. and Jones Ave. Cemeteries and facilitated the organization of the Beth Tzedec Cemetery records for JOWBR.

Recently, along with Shelley Stillman and Elaine Slavens, David hosted a meeting of volunteers at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. These volunteers are aiming to photograph and transcribe Dawes Rd. burials by the end of June (over 11,000 entries).

Needless to say, it is hard to replace people as energetic and steadfast as David Trost. David will be sorely missed. Best of luck, David, in your relocation to Vancouver!

### Introducing *Shem Tov's* New Editors

Harvey Glasner has succeeded Diane Kriger as Managing Editor of the *Shem Tov*. He is sharing editing duties with Judy Kasman.

He retired in 1999 from teaching high school students with physical and intellectual handicaps. He then went into executive search, with a focus on accounting and finance and co-authored a job search book entitled **Get Back to Work! A No-Nonsense Guide to Finding Your Next Job Fast** (Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2002).

He joined JGS Toronto in August 1996 after a trip to Israel and a chance meeting with a possible relative. His first volunteer project was to photograph and index the Rotenberg Ledger which is available on our website. He has also helped out photographing headstones at the Roselawn and Jones Avenue Cemeteries, projects that are now available online with JOWBR.

Harvey, along with his wife Adena, are also active volunteers with Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Toronto.



Judy Kasman is very pleased to be co-Editor of *Shem Tov*. Having been bitten by the genealogy bug almost five years ago, she realizes the importance of being kept abreast of the latest developments in the genealogy world and looks forward to helping bring news to fellow members of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto. Serving as researcher for both her and her husband's families, her work-in-progress encompasses Vilna, Sweden, western Galicia, Trinidad, Brzeziny, and Ukraine.

Judy is a former teacher, and is presently office manager for a law firm. She has worked on editing two Toronto synagogue bulletins.

Aside from spending time on genealogy, Judy has served as a synagogue Board member and is an avid jazz music fan. She is the mother of a daughter living in Toronto and a son & daughter-in-law who reside in New York.

### Hitting a Roadblock in Your Research?

*Shem Tov* will publish questions regarding your genealogical research and solicit answers from our most experienced members. Write us at [shemtov@jgstoronto.ca](mailto:shemtov@jgstoronto.ca)