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שם טוב SHEM TOV

JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA (TORONTO)

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From the Editors

As Editors of *Shem Tov*, we are always on the look-out for new material that would be of interest to keen genealogists. Needless to say, we never know what we are going to find!

This issue in particular reflects the fortuitous nature of our work: we were pointed to a recent *New York Times* article about defunct Jewish cemeteries in the United States, which led us to investigating this subject in Toronto. Then, our member, Karen Sanders, saw the information posted to our website, which prompted her to write a letter to our President. Please read her letter inside to see the remarkable personal connection.

We discovered the common thread of cemeteries in diverse subjects. But lest you think that we are preoccupied with the deceased and the past, please rest assured that we are also concerned with the present, as evidenced by the pieces that will appear in the next *Shem Tov* about Facebook, the very popular social networking phenomenon.

This issue of *Shem Tov* took on a Maritime slant as we acquired two Halifax-based news items; then a visit to Newfoundland inspired another column, which in turn led to a book written about Jews in that province. Maybe a future issue will take us to another part of Canada. We can never know!

You will note that in some of the items in this *Shem Tov*, we are asking you, our readers, for input on topics or feedback on subjects. We encourage you to drop us a line. In this way, we can all use *Shem Tov* to share information with one another (a benefit for belonging to a genealogical society); also, *Shem Tov* can become more interactive, becoming a platform for developing a dialogue on subjects that are of common interest to members of JGS Toronto.

Looking forward to hearing from you! Harvey Glasner & Judy Kasman, *Shem Tov* Editors, shemtov@jgstoronto.ca

Message from the President

As our 2009-2010 programme year begins, it is an excellent time to invite family and friends to join JGS Toronto. For those who have never belonged, new members who join in the fall receive extra months of programming as their membership will continue until the end of 2010.

Thanks to the persistence of Gert Rogers, a Past President, our JGS Toronto Family Finder is now available on our website, www.jgstoronto.ca. Only members who register on our website will be able to access this information. If you would

like to sign up for the Family Finder, or if you have corrections or additions to make to your information, please email Gert at grogers@jgstoronto.ca. Speaking of our website, be sure to check it frequently for news and updates! Also, if you have any late-breaking genealogical information to post to our website, please be sure to email it to me at president@jgstoronto.ca.

We have had great success in sending basic burial records to JOWBR (at www.Jewishgen.org); however, without help in transcribing data and proofreading spreadsheets the photography project program will come to an end. Both Elaine Slavens and a dedicated community volunteer, Robert Lubinski, are continuing to work on the Dawes Road Cemetery project. To date, photographs from only 6 sections have been submitted to JOWBR, 10 sections require careful proofreading, and a further 20 sections remain. Kevin Hanit is diligently working on the Pardes Shalom Cemetery project. To ensure that your families' sections are online, volunteer by contacting Elaine at cemetery@jgstoronto.ca

Regrettably, we are no longer able to accept tax-deductible donations on behalf of JRI-Poland or JewishGen Inc. We are working towards a new agreement with JRI-Poland. If you wish to donate to either of these organizations, please contact them directly. However, JGS Toronto always welcomes your donations (tax deductible); your contributions help us maintain high calibre programming and resources for the benefit of our members.

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Events Marking Holocaust History

by Judy Kasman

Yad Vashem Acquires Auschwitz Blueprints

On August 27, 2009 in Berlin, a ceremony took place in which blueprints of Auschwitz were turned over the Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and to Yad Vashem Chairman, Avner Shalev. These blueprints, consisting of 29 sketches, had been discovered in a flat the former East Berlin in 2008 and appear to have come from an archive. The person who discovered them turned them over to the publisher of the Germany's *Bild* newspaper. They were drawings of barracks, crematoria and delousing centres; some building were built, some partially built, and some never were constructed. The blueprints bear the initials of Heinrich Himmler and Rudolf Hoess.

Kai Diekmann, Editor of *Bild*, turned the prints over to Yad Vashem where they can be seen by many people. Although other architectural drawings of Auschwitz have previously been uncovered, this is the first set that has been acquired by Yad Vashem. The drawings will be exhibited there beginning January 27, 2010, on the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. www.yadvashem.org

Kindertransport Anniversary

On September 1, 1939, Nicholas Winton of England arranged to have 609 children, mostly Jewish, taken from Prague to London on eight trains to prevent them from being sent to concentration camps. The children were housed and raised with British families, in some cases being reunited after the War with their birth families. This evacuation became known as the *Kindertransport*.

To mark the 70th anniversary of this historic event, 170 people, including 22 of the original "children", boarded a vintage train in Prague to take the journey to London by the same route as seventy years prior, set to arrive on September 5, 2009, where they were greeted by Sir Nicholas Winton, now 100 years of age. A statue of "Sir Nicky" was unveiled in Prague's central train station to commemorate his heroic efforts.

www.kindertransport.org

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Contributions are invited. Please submit material to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca or to Shem Tov Editors, P.O. Box 91006, 2901 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, ON M2K 2Y6. Publication is at the Editors' discretion.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) was founded in 1986. Membership is \$40 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.

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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Resting Places in Turmoil? The State of Jewish Burial Societies

by *Harvey Glasner*

“Someone was buried in Florence Marmor’s grave, and it was not Florence Marmor.” “When Mrs. Marmor visited her deceased husband’s cemetery plot in Flushing, Queens, one afternoon, she found that someone had been freshly buried in the spot next to his, where she had planned to rest someday. No one could tell her why.”

Strange and anguish-filled discoveries like this have been outlined in Paul Vitello’s recent column in the New York Times, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/03/nyregion/03bury.html>.



The chief reason for the problem that has mainly plagued New York, Boston and other Northeastern cities: the administrators of the Jewish burial societies are no longer alive or they are so infirm as to be incapable of fulfilling the duties for which they were elected.

Does the problem exist here in the GTA? The answer is yes, according to Corina Burnell of the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Services, Cemetery Regulations Unit. The Jewish community gets around provincial oversight as burials are administered through synagogues and burial societies which are considered to be social groups made up of members.

According to a representative of one of the Toronto Jewish cemeteries and a prominent local Jewish funeral home, none of the U.S. problems have occurred here yet as cemetery administrators will take control of membership lists when the leadership of a group is no longer viable.

Can we take at face value that the records of some inadequately-operated burial societies are reliable and, most importantly, that the wishes of our loved ones are being fulfilled?

If you have views regarding this topic and wish them to be voiced in *Shem Tov*, please write to the Editors at shem-tov@jgstoronto.ca.

Footnote: Further to the article above, we are pleased to print the following letter sent by our member, Karen Sanders, to our Society President:

Dear Shelley,

I just went to the website and was pleased to see the information about JCAM, the Jewish Cemetery Association of Massachusetts. My father, Oscar Cheses, started JCAM. After he retired in 1980 it was his dream to create this organization. He himself had managed the cemetery for his father’s *landsleit* organization and knew that there was no one coming after him to do the job. The other motivator for him was the fact that Massachusetts laws allowed cemeteries of defunct organizations to be abandoned (something that could not happen in Toronto). He had a relative who was buried in an abandoned, overgrown, cemetery. He also realized that there were many organizations that though defunct, had perpetual care money, but no one to look after things. He envisioned this organization to manage the money and use the extra to reclaim and care for the abandoned cemeteries. He went around to all the local cemetery associations to get them interested in his concept. Many were interested immediately, and many became interested in time.

My dad died 18 years ago. He was JCAM’s first executive director and lived to see it grow and succeed. He would be very proud to see what JCAM has become today. I’m very proud to see it too. Thanks for putting the notice about JCAM on our website.

Karen Sanders

ADVERTISING RATES

SHEM TOV is now accepting display advertising for publication. Advertisers are requested to supply camera-ready art and payment by November 2009 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 91006, 2901 Bayview Ave., Toronto, Ontario M2K 1H0.

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)



Wednesday, September 30 at 8.00 pm

Returning to My Grandfather's Home

Dorothy Pullan's parents were born and married in Lagov, Poland. Though born in Canada, she and her sisters grew up with parents that knew nothing of Canadian society. They knew about their grandparents only through the tales of their parents and the songs that her mother constantly sang. Dorothy always yearned to experience the early life that influenced her and her sisters and in turn had a major impact on them and their children. She could never convince her parents, like other Polish immigrants, to travel back to the homeland that they hated. After they passed away, Dorothy and her son, Eli, travelled to Lagov to complete this emotional voyage.

Speaker: Dorothy Pullan and Eli Pullan

Dorothy is a retired clinical psychologist. Her interest in genealogy began after meeting cousins that had survived the Holocaust. Dorothy is a member of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Toronto.

Eli is a practicing lawyer, married with two teen-age daughters.

What's New in Jewish Genealogy - A Report From the IAJGS Conference

Speaker: Rolf Lederer, JGS Toronto member

Bill 149, The Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act

Speakers: Rob Leverty, Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society, and Marjorie Stuart, Editor of *Cemetery News* for Ontario Historical Society, and Ontario Genealogical Society member

Sunday, October 18 - Workshop from 1:00-5:00 pm

Writing Jewish Family Stories and Memoirs

Leader: Lil Blume

Cost: Members \$15 Non-Members \$25

By pre-registration only! Please refer to JGS Toronto website for details. Space is limited.

Workshop Description

Stories passed from one generation to the next carry the values, culture, and unique mythology of the family. Knowing our family's stories solidifies our sense of belonging. If you have been thinking of turning your genealogical data into stories or weaving genealogy into your memoirs, then this workshop is for you.

Alongside short writing sessions, we will address as many of the following questions as we can in the time available:

- How do I get started?

- What stories and memories should I choose?
- How do I organize this story?
- Who is my audience?
- What do I say about scandals and secrets?
- What has to be true? What can I make up? How do I handle multiple points of view and arguments about what happened?
- What makes a good story?

Participants have many issues in common and are guided to finding the best answers for their individual projects. We write and share and people leave with renewed commitment to getting these important stories into an exciting and accessible format.

Bring pens and paper.

Workshop Leader

Lil Blume is a teacher, writer, and workshop leader living in Toronto. She presented this workshop at the 2009 Limmud Festival in Toronto and has led family stories workshops for JCCs, shuls, and festivals in Hamilton, Edmonton, Victoria, and Vancouver. In a story published in *Parchment: The Journal of Contemporary Canadian Jewish Writing*, Lil explored her family chess-playing across four generations. Lil also teaches communication workshops in industrial, health care, and educational environments on both Canadian coasts and many places in between. She is currently an instructor in the Computer Science Department at the University of Toronto. For more information, see www.lilblume.ca.

Wednesday, November 4 at 7:30 pm

(A Holocaust Education Week event)

Documenting the Fate of Victims: Researching the Records of the International Tracing Service, Bad Arolsen, Germany

The release of the ITS files has opened a vast resource for researchers of their families' Holocaust-era history. This presentation will explore how best to gain access to the secrets, long-hidden in millions of reference files in the ITS archives. In addition, it will explore what the ITS is, the nature of its holdings, and look at related Holocaust resources.

The ITS mission: "The ITS serves the victims of Nazi persecution and their families by maintaining an archive that documents the fate of the victims. Millions of records compiled in one central archive bear witness to the horrors of World War II and, as a whole, form a meaningful memorial for generations to come. The ITS stores the historical records and makes them available to the public for research purposes."

This archive has millions of records and documents both of victims of the Holocaust and survivors. The files have concentration camp lists, deportation lists, ship manifests of survivors, and war time history of the persecuted.

During his May 2008 visit, as part of the first group of genealogists to visit the archives, Mr. Goldstein succeeded in bringing back documentation on a number of people and unearthed information for clients which enabled them to know of the past, and in some cases identified unknown family members and unknown personal information.

Michael Goldstein, born in Toronto and raised in Montreal, is a Jerusalem-based genealogist who researches, mentors and lectures throughout the world. He carries out North American, Israeli, Holocaust era and international Jewish research.

Michael Goldstein holds a BA from Concordia University and an MSW from Yeshiva University. He serves as President of the Israel Genealogical Society, and belongs to the Association of Professional Genealogists and the Jewish Genealogy Society of Montreal. He has just been installed as President of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

Wednesday, November 25 at 8:00 pm

Ancestral Mission: Unexpected Discoveries

This is the personal story of Karen Lasky's parents' survival, her returning to Poland and discovering their birth homes & archival records (all of which she thought were lost), and finishing with a visit to the new Bergen-Belsen memorial museum & her birthplace in the DP Camp.

Speaker Karen Lasky is a member of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Toronto

Wednesday, December 16 at 8:00 pm

Rafael Goldchain's *I Am My Family – Photographic Memories and Fictions* is a book published by Princeton Architectural Press in 2008. It is family album of traditional portrait photographs with an unconventional twist: the only subject is Goldchain himself! In an elaborate process involving genealogical research, the use of makeup, hair-styling, costume, and props, Goldchain transforms himself into his ancestors and captures their personifications with the camera. Taking some liberties with historical accuracy, Goldchain has assembled a fascinating cast of characters: from his short-story-writing grandfather, to his great-aunts Pola and Fela, to the Gur Rabbi's nephew and his bride Rachelle in her wedding dress, Goldchain reinvents himself over and over again. These beautifully reproduced self-portraits trace the evolution of Jewish culture from tradition to modernity and invite us to engage the history of a family decimated and scattered by the traumatic events of the 20th century. Please visit www.rafaelgoldchain.com

Speaker: Rafael Goldchain

Wednesday, January 27, 2010 at 8:00 pm

Subject: Analyzing Photographs

This presentation will look at the history of photography and inform us as how to analyze a photograph to determine the date, location and other important elements. We will also be told about the sources that are available to figure out details about the individuals in the photos, if required. Images from the Ontario Jewish Archive's holdings will be used as examples.

Speaker: Ellen Scheinberg, Ph.D. Director, Ontario Jewish Archives, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Wednesday, March 24 at 8:00 pm at North York Central Library, Toronto Public Library

Presented in association with The Canadiana Department of the Library

The Toronto Jewish Community: Portrait of Our Past (1900-1930)

Speaker: Prof. Harold Troper

Please be sure to check our website, www.jgstoronto.ca, for programming updates!

**JGS Toronto Visits the
Toronto Reference Library**

by Linda Offman

On Wednesday afternoon, May 27, 2009, a group of JGS Toronto members attended a tour of the Special Collections, Genealogy and Maps Centre (4th floor) of the Toronto Reference Library (on Yonge Street, just north of Bloor), led by TPL Librarian, Ms. Lillian Mitchell.

The group learned how to access materials from the open shelves and closed stacks, a service available to card-carrying members of the Toronto Library system. Out-of-town patrons may have access too, when presenting proper ID. Special forms are available to use materials in the Arthur Conan Doyle Room and the Baldwin Reading Room.

The Collections housed at Toronto Reference are immense. Family Histories and published genealogical sources are found in the stacks, City Directories in the Directories Centre as well as Telephone Directories. Ontario Genealogical Society cemetery transcriptions are located on open shelves and file cabinets. There is an amazing section for maps, atlases and gazetteers in the Map Section. Periodicals and microfilm collections are also available.

Following the tour of the fourth floor resources, the group moved to the basement level of the Library for a hands-on session using the computers in the Learning Centre. Participants were able to explore a sample of the available online database collections. Ancestry Library Edition is a great resource that is available at all TPL Libraries. It can be booked for up to one hour's use per day at no cost. The group learned that if you want to search the *Toronto Star* Pages of the Past and the *Globe and Mail's* Canada's Heritage sites at home, you may do so by remote access at the Toronto Public Libraries website, <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca>

Ms. Mitchell was kind enough to provide a package of handouts for all the participants. Many thanks are extended to Ms. Mitchell for an excellent tour, and to Mr. Bill Hamade for arranging the event for the Society.



A Personal Journey of Discovery

by Karen Lasky



This is Part 3 of a 3-part series

My mission was drawing to a close. While I now possessed photos of my experience in locating both of my parents' homes, I still longed for the ultimate proof of my ancestors' existence in the form of archival records. I was set to depart Wloclawek for Berlin by train the following day at noon. I begged Andrew (my Polish tour guide) to rise early on this last morning to accompany me to the Regional Archives Office for a final attempt at locating these records. He looked less than hopeful as we had little time and no appointment, and he had not had much success in the past with such discoveries. Nonetheless, he consented and we arrived as the doors opened, heading for the records office where he did some fast talking while I patiently waited. Moments later, I see the Clerk carting several massive Archive Books on a trolley. He and Andrew then closely search the huge pages while in lively discussion, unrecognizable to me. Finally, Andrew signals me to approach the desk.



Author and Clerk with Archive Books

He points to a page and explains that they have found a complete listing from Brzesc Kujawski of my maternal great grandparents, dating back to 1847. The records indicate birth dates of their siblings and children, and my mother's complete family, written in a Russian style of Polish which I am unable to read. While Andrew translated, the surprise was visible on my face, as I confirmed that my Mother's birth date was correct. I was stunned, that in a few moments, I now knew all my previously unnamed maternal family members, and the full names of my great grandparents from the photos I possessed.

Andrew requests photocopies and the Clerk obliges. Although we request the same search for my father's families, he informs us that he cannot take any further time that day. He promises to continue the research following my departure from

Poland, and forward the records electronically to me. I am not convinced. However, Andrew is grateful since it is 10:30 a.m. and we have more than an hour's drive to the train station in Kutno to meet my noon departure.

I am so utterly grateful to Andrew Durman for what he has personally achieved for me. Emotionally overwhelmed, I attempt to say goodbye with a promise to return some day. I furiously document on my laptop all my findings over the two-day mission. Two profound thoughts occur to me while on this train ride from Poland to Germany: firstly, that I am for the first time about to set foot upon the homeland of the Nazis that murdered my families, and millions of others, and furthermore, I am possibly upon the same train tracks that carried my ancestors to ghettos and death camps. This is a subject for another story.

While I attempt to come to terms with all my findings, some weeks later, to my surprise, the young Polish clerk fulfilled his promise. I receive archival records for my father's entire family in Lubraniec, dating back to 1840 and those of my great grandparents. I know not if this young man is aware of how much he contributed to helping complete the missing pages of my history. I continue to be surprised by my findings and moreover, with what this has done for my personal understanding of where I came from. I am eager to share my discoveries with whomever wishes to learn about finding historical roots.

Archived Record of Author's Maternal Families from Brzesc Kujawski Shtetl - Russian Style of Polish Text

Lp.	Imię i nazwisko		Imiona rodziców i nazwisko matki	Data urodzenia			Miejsce urodzenia
	Mężczyzny	Kobiety		Dzień	Miesiąc	Rok	
1	Zelig Śpiewak		Jakub i Liba z domu Przytycka	1	sierpnia	1847	Brześć Kujawski
2		Mariem Śpiewak z domu Kalman	Chackiel i Estera z domu Służewska	2	sierpnia	1847	Lubraniec gminy Piaski
3	Abram Śpiewak		Zelig i Mariem Z domu Kalman	9/21	lipca	1873	Lubraniec gminy Piaski
4	Józef Hersz Śpiewak		Zelig i Mariem Z domu Kalman	17/1	lutego/ marca	1878	Lubraniec gminy Piaski
5		Sprinca Spiewak	Zelig i Mariem Z domu Kalman	2/14	sierpnia	1880	Lubraniec gminy Piaski

Archival records of Spiewak Paternal family records from Lubraniec Shtetl

New Archives of Ontario Facility

by Harvey Glasner



“A strong, modern Archives is essential to preserve Ontario’s past and bring it alive for current and future generations.”

Miriam McTiernan, Archivist of Ontario,
from Archives website

The Archives of Ontario, (www.archives.gov.on.ca) has moved to a wonderful new state-of-the-art building on the Keele Campus of York University (134 Ian Macdonald Boulevard, Toronto, Ontario, Canada).

Not all records are available online or will be for the foreseeable future. To access the full range of records to research your family you do need to visit the archives for such records as estate files, Crown land records, private property land records, education records, divorce files, maps, and private papers such

as those of the T. Eaton Co.

Whereas the hours of the Archives were originally 8:15 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays, the new hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Fridays only. Given that many searches require a personal visit, it is unfortunate that the public visiting hours have become so restrictive.

If you are, or plan to be, a user of the Archives of Ontario and wish to petition for a re-instatement of the old hours, you can go to the website of The Global Gazette Canada’s Online Family History Magazine <http://globalgenealogy.com/globalgazette/gazrr/gazrr181.htm>.

Finding Jews in Unexpected Places?

by Harvey Glasner

While on a fishing trip to Newfoundland this past summer, I joked with my buddy about doing a mezuzah count in the quaint, northern Newfoundland fishing village of Twillingate. We both laughed at the slim prospects of encountering any evidence of Jewishness in this part of the country.

Later that evening we were walking the dog and came across a small cemetery. My friend John said in his typical matter-of-fact tone, "I see Magen Davids over there." Thinking that John (who is Sephardi) was pulling my chain, I laughed. "No", he said, "I'm serious. Look!!"

We walked over to a family plot that was demarcated by a low, oblong stone fence. Before us were headstones with Jewish symbols for Captain Saul White and his wife Martha, and Arthur Gillett. In fact, there were numerous Magen Davids in the cemetery, aside from those ones. Remarkable!!

I subsequently Googled "Captain Saul White" and found an account of a very colourful sealer under "*Doctor Olds of Twillingate: Portrait of an American Surgeon in Newfoundland*" by Gary Saunders.

http://books.google.ca/books?id=mWFpgwrsCKIC&pg=PA151&lpg=PA151&dq=Captain+Saul+White&source=bl&ots=Ki5ete3C08&sig=AGA8C0va5GtiFJ0bsKL-sse452s&hl=en&ei=J5JwSsaLLJGMMZG07ekI&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1

Author Robin McGrath is presently the only Jew, to her knowledge, in Goose Bay, Nfld. Her book, *Salt Fish and Shmattes The History of the Jews of Newfoundland and Labrador from the 1770s*, provides an Index of Jews in Newfoundland which points to several families who resided in this area in the past. However, Ms. McGrath claims that Wesleyan Christians often use Jewish proper names and symbols such as the Magen David. Please go to our website to see the Index of Jews in Newfoundland under Resources, Canadian. If you have any additions or correction for this Index, just send an email to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca and we will be sure to pass them along to Ms. McGrath.

To see a review by Prof. Norman Ravvin of *Salt Fish and Shmattes*, please go to p.9 of this *Shem Tov*.

Displayed with this column are photos of some of the headstones we discovered. Do they mark Jewish burial plots? We really don't know. Perhaps our readers can shed some light on this. Please send relevant information to shemtov@jgstoronto.ca.

JGS Toronto is offering a one-year membership to JGS to the researcher who comes up with the most insightful data about Jews, crypto-Jews and/or converts to Judaism/Christianity in northern Newfoundland.

This offer is available to members and non-members alike. Please respond by December 1, 2009. The Executive will announce a winner at our January, 2010 General Meeting. Good luck!!

Pier 21 Halifax to Become a National Museum of Immigration

by Harvey Glasner

On June 25, 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the Statement of Intentions to designate a National Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Pier 21 has often been described as the "Ellis Island" of Canada. 1.5 million Immigrants, war brides, displaced people, evacuee children and Canadian military personnel passed through Pier 21 between 1928 and 1971. Even before Pier 21, tens of thousands of immigrants (including my grandparents) first set foot on Canadian soil Canada at the Port of Halifax.

Since opening as a museum on July 1, 1999, Pier 21 has enjoyed a high degree of success and acclaim for celebrating Canada's immigration history. Pier 21 is dedicated to preserving, celebrating and sharing Canada's immigration stories.

For Jews, Pier 21 symbolizes sanctuary from the chaos of Europe and Russia. We can only speculate how few Ashkenazi would have been permitted to settle in Canada were it not for the very brief open door policy established by Sir Clifford Sifton (1861-1929), Minister of the Interior for Canada (1896-1905).

For enthusiasts of genealogy, Pier 21 is a must-visit on any forthcoming vacation to the Maritime Provinces. The website of the Pier 21 Museum offers a valuable ship arrival database: <http://www.pier21.ca/>



New arrivals disembarking ship

*JGS Toronto is pleased to welcome
its new members*

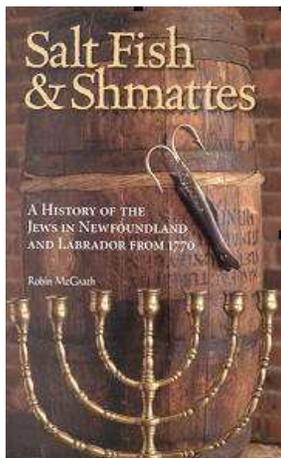
Marilyn Glass Michael Betel

BOOK REVIEW

Salt Fish & Shmattes

A History of the Jews in Newfoundland and Labrador from 1770

by Robin McGrath
Creative Publishers, 2006.



Reviewed by Prof. Norman Ravvin¹,
Concordia University, Montreal

Review reprinted with permission of Prof. Ravvin

Canadian Jewish history is overwhelmingly a story told of major centres—Montreal and Toronto, with a nod to the once-major Winnipeg. The discipline has one overwhelmingly influential text, Hesh Troper and Irving Abella’s *None is Too Many*. But vital, lesser known work has also been done by Richard Menkis, Frank Bialystok, and Ira Robinson, alongside Troper’s studies of ethnic relations and immigration. Still, the centre holds, and it will take large shifts in the field for sustained work to be done on the Prairies, on coastal communities, or the north. Robin McGrath’s *Salt Fish & Shmattes* contributes to a reordering of priorities. McGrath is a writer and folk historian with an ear for oral history, as well as the anthropologist’s affection for kinship lines. She manages to convey the particularity of Jewish settlement in Newfoundland, both in St. John’s and in the outports. And she accomplishes this without the common tendency to apply the Montreal or Toronto patterns as templates.

Early Jewish presence in Newfoundland is obscured by myth and a lack of reliable documentation. But McGrath makes a convincingly detailed argument for the presence, in the late-eighteenth century, of a number of “crypto-Jews,” who had immigrated from such southwest English towns as Plymouth, Penzance, and Exeter. In particular, she sketches the family history of Simon Solomon, whose work as a watchmaker and unofficial postmaster on St. John’s Water Street is marked today by the presence of a Solomon’s Lane. Families with Eng-

lish Jewish backgrounds tended to disappear through intermarriage, conversion and out-migration to the eastern United States.

A second important period of Jewish settlement in Newfoundland and Labrador began as Russian Jews fled pogroms in the 1880s and 1890s. These newcomers spoke no English and found their way into peddling, after which many became shop owners or manufacturers in St. John’s. McGrath does not say so directly, but an economic history of these men and women would reveal a distinctly Jewish character to the harbour thoroughfare of Water Street in early twentieth-century St. John’s. There, Jews ran tailoring, dry goods and watch-making outfits, while an early incarnation of the city’s synagogue was installed above a barber shop. It is almost always impossible in contemporary Canadian downtowns to recover a sense of the early *yiddische gasse*, the Jewish street where newcomers built their businesses and their ritual and devotional institutions, integrating themselves into mainstream culture.

A similar ethnic history is revealed in McGrath’s description of the abandonment of an established downtown synagogue in St. John’s for a newly built suburban building. This reflects the community’s increasingly assimilated Canadian character, and its willingness to follow up-and-coming middle class postwar life away from the urban core.

To some extent, McGrath conveys the presence of Jews in Newfoundland folklore and literature, raising the possibility—however humorous and doubtful—that Joey Smallwood was capable of delivering a stump speech in Yiddish. Here she sketches a possible program of study for future students in the field. Among her discoveries is a “snapshot” from a children’s book of a Jewish “packman as most Newfoundlanders knew him” in the decades after the turn of the century:

*A peddler dressed in black clothes
Arrived at a place called Nick’s nose;
He sold powders and pills,
And smocks with nice frills,
And soap with the scent of a rose*

Message From the President - Cont’d from page 1

Thanks to Les Kelman, Lucy Sadowski and Karen Sanders for arranging a wonderful array of programmes for us this season. I hope you will attend our meetings to benefit from the knowledge of our speakers.

I certainly look forward to seeing you at our meetings! Please contact me if you would like to volunteer your talents and skills for the benefit of our Society.

The Executive and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a New Year filled with happiness, good health and many great genealogical discoveries!

Shelley Stillman, president@jgstoronto.ca

¹ *Canadian Literature*, Autumn 2007

Reports From the 2009 International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) Conference

Navigating the 29th IAJGS Conference in Philadelphia

by Henry Blumberg

The 29th International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies Conference was held from August 2-7, 2009 in Philadelphia, a city rich in Jewish history. In an article on Jewish Philadelphia in the fall 2008 edition of *Avotaynu*, David Minsk writes that the Jewish history of Philadelphia predates William Penn's presence in 1682 and that Jewish traders were in the Philadelphia area before Penn took possession of the land.

Philadelphia also houses repositories for research, and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Mid Atlantic regional office is located near the Conference hotel. There, NARA houses copies of national censuses on microfilm and many other records. In addition, there is the Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center.

I was pleased to attend the Conference as a voting delegate of JGS Toronto.

The Canadian Birds of a Feather (BOF) Meeting, coordinated by Merle Kastner of Montreal, took place on August 3, 2009 and 34 attended. A very full agenda was provided dealing with naturalization and indexing and the need for volunteers; Canadian participation in JOWBR; charitable status for JGSs; Jewish and non-Jewish archives in Canada; sharing the cost of speakers among societies; programming suggestions; increasing and retaining members, and the impact of privacy laws.

I enjoyed attending the IAJGS General Meeting with Rolf Lederer and found the issues raised at the Meeting very relevant. There were 36 member societies present with 935 attendees at the Conference. It was chaired by the outgoing President Anne Feder Lee. I was pleased to propose that a Stern Grant of \$2,500 be given to Shamir (the current Jewish Religious Community in Latvia) to commemorate the memory of Latvian Jews and the proposal was unanimously approved. The Chair emphasized that societies must inform IAJGS in regard to changes of office-bearers as they have had difficulty in the past in communicating with some societies after change of office-bearers.

An interesting report was given by Jan Meisels, Chairperson of the Public Records Monitoring Committee. She stated that a white paper is to be developed relating to states introducing egregious legislation regarding access to public records. Apparently legislators limiting access to vital records believe it will prevent identity theft. She discussed the limitation on access in California, New York, Pennsylvania, Canada, Ireland, and New Zealand as well as at the USA National Archives.

A number of other interesting issues were also raised at the IAJGS meeting. The importance of SIGs being members was discussed; if SIGs joined, it would enhance IAJGS membership significantly. The perennial issue of promoting genealogy

among youth was also discussed. It was also suggested that an international internet JGS should be formed which would be a member of IAJGS. I raised the issue of ownership of copyright relating to material placed on social interaction networks by genealogists and recommended that as this was an important developing issue that IAJGS should be concerned about.. Michael Goldstein (see *Upcoming Programmes*, p. 5) was elected as the incoming President, Michael Brenner became Vice President,. Joel Spektor Secretary and Paul Silverstone Treasurer.

This year's program, as in past years, embraced a fascinating array of events. There were the various SIG programs; the Latvian SIG lunch and business meeting, which I chaired, was very relevant to me as my father was born in Latvia. Constance Whippman, a co-founder of the All Latvia Database, who has an extensive background in Latvian genealogical research, addressed the Latvia SIG meeting on *My Life as a Project Manager: Past, Present and Future of Latvian Genealogical Research*. She referred to the All Latvia Database's "origins, early challenges, development with a focus on how documents and records are identified, chosen, translated, extracted, then converted into database format with an emphasis on how this resource can be used to help family history and preserve material for future generations"

I also gave a presentation entitled: *Step by Step: A Personal Journey of Discovery: Reconnecting Past and Present*. The presentation provided my journey of discovery that started with a few faded photographs and "no one to answer questions". Using PowerPoint, I examined the methodical and exciting genealogical research that led to connecting the past with the present - the valuing of my family heritage and establishment of meaningful contact with extended family in Latvia, Israel, USA, Australia, France and Canada. The talk traced the migration of my immediate family from 1796 in Grobina, Latvia, to New York then South Africa and finally to Canada. Having now met a number of my extended family, for me, genealogy is thus far more than just a numbers game.

The Lithuanian SIG lunch was well-attended. Regina Kopelovich, the very popular and proficient Lithuanian guide and researcher, had been invited to the Conference and she gave a presentation at the lunch entitled: *Visiting Your Ancestral Shtetl in Lithuania and Belarus*. She also gave a further lecture entitled: *Cataloging and Restoring Jewish Cemeteries in Lithuania and Belarus*. Many at the lunch had used her professional services. For many, the luncheon was similar to a reunion. Many recalled her individually-tailored trips and her very great skill in reading tombstones, cataloging and restoring cemeteries. She is fluent in English, Russian, Lithuanian, Hebrew and Yiddish. Many sessions were of great interest; nevertheless, for me, the most enjoyable part of these IAJGS conferences is meeting the attendees and renewing relationships. In addition, it was very worthwhile to meet leaders of other SIGs and JGSs. Among the regular attendees were Howard Margol, truly the doyen of

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Lithuanian genealogy; Rolf Lederer, a genealogy stalwart of many decades; Saul Issroff of the SA SIG; Warren Blatt of JewishGen, and Gary Mokotoff of *Avotaynu*, to mention a few. Then there are the new faces and expanding the range of genealogical friendships. My greatest research breakthroughs have come from the chance meeting of fellow researchers who turn out to be extended family members and that for me has been the most exciting and interesting aspect of attending the JGS Conferences.

Choosing from the 100s of sessions and programs listed in the Conference Program Schedule, and more fully detailed in the Conference Syllabus, is a daunting task. After the "essentials" such as the Canadian BOF meeting and the IAJGS meeting, I reviewed the various SIG programs. It is a challenge to decide which SIG meetings to attend and then to fit in all the other fascinating sessions after that. I obviously had to attend the Latvia SIG meeting – what else can I say when I organized it. Having been born in South Africa meant that I felt compelled to attend the SA SIG meeting. As my wife's family came from Lithuania and I have visited Lithuania on two occasions, could I miss that meeting? My great great-grandfather and great-great grandfather were rabbis in Minsk and emigrated to what was then Palestine... but how many SIG meetings can one attend?

There were book signings, breakfasts with research groups and experts, computer workshops and the opening session and reception. One of the most interesting events was the lecture by Father Patrick Desbois: *Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 million Jews*. Father Patrick Desbois was the winner of the B'nai Brith International Award for Outstanding Contribution to Relations with the Jewish People.

The film festival had a range of fascinating films. *The Bielski Partisans: A Granddaughter's Story* had Sharon Rennert, the granddaughter of Tuvia Bielski, exploring her family legacy with her video camera over an eleven-year journey that has taken her all over the world, from Brooklyn to Belarus, Israel and Lithuania. She discussed her family's history and screened excerpts from her work-in-progress documentary. *Lest We Forget: South African Jews and Reconciliation* takes the audience into contemporary South Africa and looks at the range of issues facing the South African Jewish community in 2007, including reconciliation and perspectives on South Africa. *The Holocaust Tourist* by the Glasgow filmmaker Jes Benstock considers the contemporary legacy of the Holocaust in Poland and his powerful documentary looks at the tourism industry that has grown up in Poland in the wake of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*.

Among the many sessions I particularly enjoyed was *Eugeen Van Mieghem and the Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line*. The fascinating lecture by Erwin Joos tells the story of the mass emigration of Eastern European Jews from Antwerp, Belgium to American ports between 1873 and 1934. Of the 2.7 million people that were transported by the Red Star Line, he estimates that 50% were Jewish. Sholem Aleichem and Yuri

Suhl described their emigration experience from Antwerp; among other important passengers were Irving Berlin, Golda Meir and Albert Einstein. Joos estimates that between 30 and 40 per cent of Jewish Americans have ancestors who sailed with the Red Star Line. The Antwerp impressionist artist Eugeen Van Mieghem is probably the only artist in Europe whose works depicted Jewish emigrants as they embarked on these ships.

Of particular interest to me was the presentation given by Dr. Stuart Rockoff entitled *Bagels & Grits: How Jews Made a Home in the U.S. South*. He described how they were able to adapt to the local culture while preserving their religious heritage. My late father had emigrated from Latvia at the age of ten to the U.S.A and I had no idea why he landed up in Greenville, Mississippi. More than 50 years after he passed away, I found the answer: he had family in the South! I have managed to find two second cousins living in Florida who used to live in Mississippi!

I look forward to seeing many of you at the IAJGS Conference in Los Angeles next year!

Teaching Genealogy From Children to Elders IAJGS Management Seminar August 2, 2009

by Judith Ghert

This inspiring session featured three speakers - Gayle Schissel-Riley, Rhoda Miller and Daniel Horowitz. All three shared their knowledge, strategies, and methodologies to help individuals and organizations provide excellent learning experiences for their pupils/ participants, whatever their ages.

GAYLE SCHISSEL-RILEY has been teaching a class in family history at Solheim Lutheran Home in Eagle Rock, California for almost nine years. These sessions are held one morning a week, bi-weekly. Astonishingly, her students are from eighty to ninety years old!

It is a challenge to teach an age group that has sight, hearing, and memory problems. Participants may not know birth dates, only have knowledge of their parents and not all of their grandparents, not be aware of maiden names, and be confused with given names that evolved from Yiddish to English over the generations. On the positive side, Gail said that she feels blessed to have the opportunity to give the seniors an enjoyable experience and a reason to get up in the morning. The sessions have a social component and improve memory skills at the same time.

As the participants tend to be intimidated by computers, a young man is on hand to explain the workings of the technology, demonstrating websites such as passenger lists. Educational components include examining their countries of origin with the aid of videos, movies with immigration themes, and an

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Teaching Genealogy From Children to Elders - Cont'd from page 11
in-depth study of the history of Ellis Island and its successor, Castle Garden/Clinton. This is done with audio-visual media as well. There are also guest speakers and date related activities, such as studying the genealogy of Abraham Lincoln on his February 12 birthday.

This is a truly unique endeavour and Gail's enthusiasm was evident in her presentation.

RHODA MILLER is a Certified Genealogist and Adjunct Associate Professor who teaches genealogy, Holocaust, and educational technology courses at Dowling College, Long Island, New York. She is President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Long Island and lectures widely at libraries, community groups and genealogy societies.

The JGS of Long Island started a collection of books in 1985, which is housed in the basement of the local Plainview Old Bethpage Library, not far from the Mid-Island JCC where the Society meetings are held. The collection, which includes four categories ("How to", Children's, Reference and Technical), is in the process of being moved upstairs to the main floor where the books will be displayed on six shelves in a prominent location. Arthur Kurzweil, "The Father of Jewish Genealogy", has donated a number of books which will be incorporated into the collection in December, 2009.

At regular meetings, a special group of "Mishpocha Mavens", members with special experience and knowledge, arrive half an hour early to help with research requests. Round tables facilitate interaction at these sessions.

Speakers may have national stature, or be from the local area. In addition, the Society provides a speakers outreach bureau for libraries, synagogues, and community groups. These member lecturers charge a \$100 fee which is split 50/50 between the speaker and the JGS.

A beginners workshop, "Four Hours to Your Roots", is held annually on the first Sunday in November. This event is advertised by a flyer with cut-off tabs. There are different early and late registration fees, with a smaller fee for additional family members. Attendance averages fifteen to twenty. Participants use a workbook that is updated annually, with surplus books sold to the membership at large. Subjects covered include tips on getting started, US and European research, and technology. A Q&A session of about 45 minutes rounds out the formal part of the workshop. Refreshments and a raffle drawing conclude the day.

Rhoda then gave an overview of the challenges of teaching genealogy for credit at college. The only institution where family history has official status is Brigham Young in Utah. Genealogy is not yet widely accepted as an academic pursuit, and is looked upon as a sub-specialty of history.

Course proposals and syllabuses must go through the governance procedures of the school, which can prove to be difficult in some cases.

The students cover a wide range of abilities and ages, from youth to returning adults. In addition, background factors come

into play - culture, recent immigration, adoption, etc. Research results may be emotionally charged and hard to grade. The fourteen-week course has its rewards in that the students have expanded their knowledge and connected to their families. They become qualified to attend conferences, join professional associations and join online discussion groups.

In the case of continuing education classes in a variety of venues, the course can be cancelled if not enough students sign up. Some registrants may be "veteran course takers" and not seriously interested in genealogy. On the plus side, there are benefits for the instructor who has the flexibility to set his or her own schedule and test teaching procedures and materials.

DANIEL HOROWITZ, who was born in Caracas, Venezuela and trained as a computer engineer, specialized in education and management of educational institutions at Herzl-Bialik School in Caracas from 1991-2005. He made *aliyah* in 2005 and now resides in Kfar Saba, Israel.

His project, "Searching for My Roots", motivates students to investigate their family's past by combining general subjects and interesting activities. This initiative has been taught at the Venezuelan school since its creation in 1978 as a three-month activity component of the Hebrew History course. Daniel directed the program from 1994-2005, making tremendous improvements by adding additional content, using new methodology, and widening its scope to a two-year course with international outreach. He was honoured with several awards for his efforts.

The project combines Social Studies, Math, Grammar, Music, Dance, Languages and Computer Science, all of which are used to develop integrated mini-projects such as time lines, family trees, and internet searches, and to exchange information with other schools in the Jewish Agency project, "Building a Jewish Virtual World".

As a final project activity, all students, parents and grandparents, along with other family members, come together at a party where the children show what they have learned through plays, songs and a display of their research. At this event, the winners of the annual Family Tree Competition which the school sponsors are announced and the students' efforts, dedication and creativity are honoured. The winning works are entered into the international competition, "My Family History", organized annually by the Douglas Goldman Center of the Museum of the Diaspora (Beth Hatefutzoth) in Tel Aviv, Israel. The school has participated annually since 1996 and has won nine prizes.

The project's goal is to help students identify personally with their religion, community and origins by investigating their family and communities' past using interesting and dynamic technologies, and activities such as interviewing family elders, gathering of information, and studying family photographs, documents, and heirlooms.

In conclusion, this session, covering diverse projects in very different locations, came together with a common theme: the passion of the presenters for teaching and bettering the lives of their students, both young and old.