




---

# MONTREAL FORUM

---

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MONTREAL

---

## TO CATCH YOUR EYE

As she wandered around the grounds of an hotel in Windermere, **Milly Charon** stooped to pat a friendly Afghan dog. This gorgeous animal clearly belonged to someone, and Milly impulsively followed her new friend back to its owners to find out who else was enjoying the charms of the Lake District. What followed over the next few years was truly amazing. Friendship, story-telling, inspiration, and research spread out over three continents, culminating in a heart-warming family gathering. This story gives the animal lovers among us a great opportunity to say: “Always greet a friendly dog. You never know where it will lead you.”

We members of JGS-Montreal, regardless of where our ancestral towns were located, share a common interest in the Jewish aspects of this city that we call home. This is equally true for those of us who are 1<sup>st</sup> generation immigrants, as well as those with 3, 5 or even more generations of Montreal family behind them. And unquestionably the most detailed record of Jewish Montreal is housed in the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives. In each issue of this journal, **Janice Rosen**, who is director of this archival collection, tells us about some of the treasures. Her important announcement for this issue is titled *A New Face for the Archives*, and gives us a first glimpse of their new and improved website. The range of material already available is mightily interesting, and there is plenty more to follow. As the saying goes, stayed tuned.

Another story comes from **Joan Goldstein**, who plans trips with the express purpose of searching for her past, be it family or those very special friends who play such an important part in our lives. She is happy to share her interesting tale with us, which illustrates how the joy of renewing ties with the past can be combined with providing future generations with stories of our own lives.

Anne Joseph

Jewish Genealogical Society  
of Montreal

Founded 1995

Member of the  
International Association of  
Jewish Genealogical Societies

Web Site  
<http://www.jgs-montreal.org>

Mailing Address  
5599 Edgemore Ave, Côte St Luc,  
Montreal, Quebec H4W 1V4

Hot Line: 514-484-0969

President.....Stanley Diamond  
[smsdiamond@aol.com](mailto:smsdiamond@aol.com) 514-484-0100

Programme.....Merle Kastner  
[merlek@videotron.ca](mailto:merlek@videotron.ca) 514-735-4739

Membership.....Jerry Zell  
[jzell@videotron.ca](mailto:jzell@videotron.ca) 514-486-2171

Database Manager  
& Webmaster.....Alan Greenberg  
[alan.greenberg@mcgill.ca](mailto:alan.greenberg@mcgill.ca) 514-483-3853

Editor.....Anne Joseph  
[aejoseph@videotron.ca](mailto:aejoseph@videotron.ca) 514-487-1214

**PROGRAMMING**

Address all enquiries to Merle Kastner  
[merlek@videotron.ca](mailto:merlek@videotron.ca)  
 or phone our Hot Line – 514-484-0969  
 All events at 5151 Côte Ste Catherine Road  
 unless otherwise specified

**MONTHLY LECTURE SERIES**

**Monday 11 December 2006 at 7.30pm**

Merle Kastner will speak about her recent trip to Vilnius, Kaunas and various shtetls in Suwalki gubernia, NE Poland. She will focus on how to prepare for such a trip and what to expect.

**Monday 15 January 2007 at 7.30pm**

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Film Night.

**Wednesday 21 February 2007 at 7.00pm sharp**

Guided, hands-on meeting at Centre de Montréal des Archives Nationales du Québec, located at 535 Viger Avenue East.

**FAMILY TREE WORKSHOPS**

**First Sunday of each month – 10.00am to noon**

**Unless otherwise indicated**

- Sunday 3 December
- Sunday 7 January
- Sunday 4 February
- Sunday 11 March (the 4<sup>th</sup> is Purim)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<u>Page</u>
To Catch Your Eye -----	1
Programming -----	2
A Dog, a Few People and a Family Reunited by Miriam Charon -----	2
A New Face for the Archives by Janice Rosen -----	5
A Reunion in Summer by Joan Goldstein -----	6
President’s message Lost Opportunities -----	8
Montreal – In Days Gone By Montreal in the 1760s -----	9

**A DOG, A FEW PEOPLE,  
THREE CONTINENTS AND  
A FAMILY REUNITED  
by Milly Charon**

*Montreal JGS member Milly Charon is a published author, linguist and history buff. Born here, her background has always kept her focus on the world at large, particularly that of her ancestors.*

*This article first appeared in the September 2006 issue of Roots-Key JGSLA, and is reproduced here with permission of the editor, Nancy Holden.*

In the summer of 1971, on a month-long trip to England, I patted an Afghan Dog running around the lawns at the Old England Hotel in Windemere, the Lake District. Curious to see to whom it belonged, I followed it back to its owners, who turned out to be one of two couples who had come up from London for the weekend.

We became friends and spent the two days with them. When the Harts mentioned they had a cousin in Australia, I told them the story of how I had lost my aunt and her two daughters in Europe during the Second World War. I had grown up without my aunts, uncles, cousins or grandparents as a result of a maniac who wanted to conquer the world.

A postcard had come from Switzerland in 1946 that my aunt had survived with two young daughters, and although my father wanted to sponsor her, she chose Australia instead. We didn’t know she had family there.

The Harts promised to get in touch with their cousin, but it wasn’t until they came to visit Montreal the following year that any attempt was made at a serious search.

After my father died in 1974, I went through his papers and found that postcard, and another that had been sent from Australia shortly after their arrival. I examined it, and the location was

faintly marked on the cancelled stamp. However, the place didn't exist. I tried to find it on a map of Australia, but I had no idea that being new immigrants, my aunt Miriam had misspelled the name – Hillsville. It was actually Healesville.

The following year we moved my mother up from Los Angeles to live with us, and suddenly in the midst of my painting the flat, there came a letter from the Harts telling us that their cousin was travelling around the world. He had been very ill and wanted to see it in case he didn't survive. Would we take care of him? Of course, and we did for the few days he was here. When I told him the story of how I had lost my only surviving family, he said his mother Bunty knew just about everyone in the community who had immigrated after the war, and he was calling her that evening.

A week or so later an aerogram arrived in which Bunty asked for copies of any photographs I might have of my aunt, uncle and cousins and to make copies along with any information I knew about them. I scoured my mother's brain hoping she knew more than I did. I sent everything off and when I didn't hear anything for over six weeks, I figured the search had been futile.

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, the first snow had fallen, and as I ran down the stairs to the garage to drive to the doctor for an allergy shot, I grabbed the mail from the box and leafed through it. At the bottom step, I halted in shock. An aerogram with "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED" in red ink weakened my knees, and I sat down in the snow on the steps. It soaked through my clothes and with tears pouring down my face, I tore open the letter and read how this remarkable woman had hunted for my family in Melbourne, Australia. Her words were

*I went to the Immigration Service. To my surprise I found a friend with whom I had been in school years before. She said to come into the archives and help her search because a regular hunt through proper channels would take months. In the 1947 section, we*

*found a little yellow card with the name of my aunt, two cousins, Esther and Hunny, and the name and address of the woman, Anna Sverdlov, who had sponsored them. Since your aunt might have remarried, her name would have changed, as well as that of the girls, so I figured that Sverdlov was the best clue.*

*I copied the address and drove there, but no one had heard of her. I went down one side of the street and then the other – no luck. I called my friend and asked to verify the address. I had copied it wrong; it was a different street, with a similar name. I did the same thing there, again nothing. I tried the seniors' homes; no one there by that name, the cemetery, because next of kin is listed, the hospitals, nothing. By then it was close to dinner. Hang dinner, I thought, and went and picked up a prepared meal at a caterer.*

*I don't know what made me do it, but when I got home, I called the operator in Sydney, north of Melbourne, and asked if there was a Sverdlov listed. Imagine, there was one! I took the number and called, and when I told the woman that family in Canada was hunting for Miriam Simon and her daughters, she became excited and gave me the number in Melbourne. It turned out that she was your aunt's sister. You didn't know she had a sister, did you?*

*I called your aunt and she was hysterical at the news. Her husband was quite ill, and she asked me to call Hunny, her younger daughter. After I wrote the number down, I did, and Hunny thought it was a hoax. I suggested she come over to my house and look at the pictures. She would recognize her parents' wedding photos. As soon as she arrived with her youngest daughter, three-year-old Simone, and saw the photos, she knew I wasn't making it up.*

*And imagine, I didn't know your cousin Esther's new name with her second marriage, but we were friends many years before when we were young couples. We lost touch. I found your family and an old friend. Milly, here are their addresses. Esther has just moved from Sydney to Melbourne. Write to them.*

And I did just that, and after a year-and-a-half, my head was in Australia and my body was in Montreal. I had to meet them. My husband said to make arrangements to go there or I'd be a basket case.

When I arrived, after clearing immigration, a group of people were standing there and I had no idea what my family looked like. A little voice said “Milly?” and everyone had come to the airport, Bunty, my cousins, their husbands, my aunt. It was a tearful but joyous reunion. On the way from the airport, I sat in the back seat with my aunt in Hunny’s and Henry’s car, and suddenly my aunt opened up and told me the story of how she had fled from the Dijon area of

her, the bullets coming dangerously close. She ran down into a stream and looking up, saw uniforms in front of her.

Terrified, she didn’t know which way to run, up or downstream, but when the soldiers in front began firing back at the Germans behind her, she knew they were Swiss. One of them ran down the slope and pulled her and the children to safety. My aunt was a heroine, and that was how she saved the lives of the girls and herself.

My cousin and her husband had listened in shock and he pulled to the side of the road and stopped. In all the years after the war, their mother had never spoken of what had transpired. She couldn’t. It had been too traumatic. I was amazed at the strength she had displayed. My uncle had disappeared and was never found, and my aunt remarried to a man who had also lost his family in the Holocaust.



**Elder Daughter Esther, Aunt Miriam, Younger Daughter Hunny  
Photographed on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1995**

France with her two young daughters after my uncle, who had escaped from a labour camp, had been picked up by German soldiers when someone in the village squealed that he was hiding on a farm. The farmer sent one of his children to warn her to leave because the soldiers were coming for her next. My aunt, still in her slippers, grabbed her two little daughters, the youngest 8 months old and taking what little money she had, bolted for the railway station. She had heard of a village priest near the Swiss border who was aiding refugees to escape, and she took a train northward.

I spent a month with them and Bunty, and I have never in my life had an experience such as that. And now they are finally here, my wonderful cousins, and I’m very happy to have you meet them. They’ll be meeting my children and grandchildren for the first time.

To this day I ask myself: “What if I hadn’t patted the dog and followed it back to its owners?”

Milly Charon

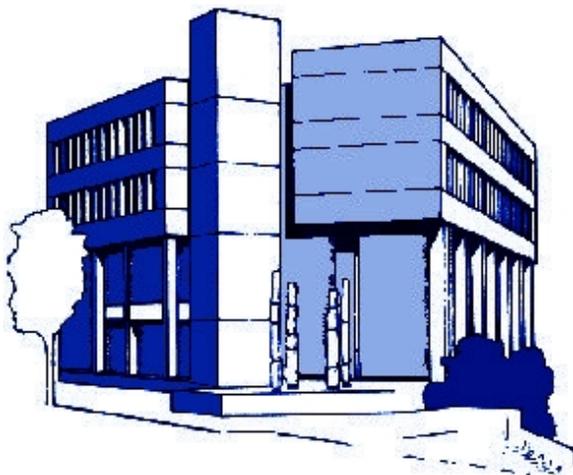
-----  
**IAJGS**  
**NEXT INTERNATIONAL**  
**CONFERENCES**

2007: 15-20 July - Hilton Salt Lake City Center  
 Reg’n now open at <http://www.slc2007.org>

2008: 17-22 August - Chicago Marriott Hotel  
 -----

## A NEW FACE FOR THE ARCHIVES

by Janice Rosen  
Archives Director  
Canadian Jewish Congress  
Charities Committee National  
Archives



More and more as time goes on, one's first point of encounter with a place of research is through its web site. Thus when circumstances recently required that our venerable institution draw attention to its charitable status through an addition to our name, we welcomed the opportunity to clothe ourselves in a new virtual wardrobe.

We have now moved to the web location [http://www.cjccc.ca/national\\_archives](http://www.cjccc.ca/national_archives). (Those wishing to access the site in French can go to <http://www.cjccc.ca/archives>.) This interface, while less flashy than our previous home, has the advantage of allowing us to add a much wider variety of material, as we are freed from the limitations of the former database-driven format. A new feature on the site is a series of issues of our *National Archives Newsletter*, formerly a limited distribution publication, which can now be accessed through the **Archives Topics** page.

One place on the site which has benefited significantly from the move is the *Canadian Jewish Casualties in the Canadian Armed Forces* database that I wrote about in the previous issue. Newly positioned at <http://www.cjccc.ca/archives/casualties.php> (although the former address will also work) this site has now been enhanced with photos of several of the soldiers, or of their tombstones. Check out the additional information page for **William Guy Rosenthal** and **Moses Lewis Usher** for examples of bonus "album" pages filled with extra photos and information. These were designed by our Pagemaker expert Shirley Brodt.

We would very much like to receive additional visual materials for our Casualties listings. To contribute, please contact H el ene at [helenev@cjccc.ca](mailto:helenev@cjccc.ca). As a final note on the subject of the casualties database, I am pleased to report that the work of H el ene Vall ee, the prime mover for this web database, was acknowledged with praise from the Jewish veterans at the YM-YWHA during their annual Remembrance Day gathering this year.

Those interested in exploring the rest of the [www.cjccc.ca](http://www.cjccc.ca) website will find several other informative features, such as a Jewish holiday calendar good for planning until 2010, a directory of synagogues across Canada, and a varied list of useful web links.

The CJCCC National Archives web presence is still a work in progress, and it is keeping us quite busy in consequence. Many recent collections have been added to the now easier-to-navigate Archives Collections Guide. Our immediate future plans for the Guide are the addition of illustrative photos to many of the collection descriptions, and the installation of a site-specific search engine. For the present time we recommend that researchers wanting to search by keyword make use of the quite amazing capacities of advanced Google searching by "site or domain", which can be found at [http://www.google.ca/advanced\\_search?hl=en](http://www.google.ca/advanced_search?hl=en).

Our longer range plan is to make available in alphabetical table format the thousands of names of people and organizations represented in our extensive subject files. This will open up for research parts of our collection previously accessible only through direct contact with our Archives.

This is not to say that we are looking for ways to diminish contact with our users! We also welcome your comments and suggestions for further developments.

For comments and queries, please contact:  
Janice Rosen [janicer@cjccc.ca](mailto:janicer@cjccc.ca)  
CJCCNA tel. 514-931-7531 extension 2.

---

## A REUNION IN SUMMER

### by Joan Goldstein

*Joan Goldstein, Ph.D., lives in New Jersey, and is a Research Sociologist with appointments at Mercer County Community College and Rider University. Besides her strong interest in Romanian genealogy, Joan is a poet and artist. In this article she tells us of her memorable visit with an old friend in Nova Scotia.*

Though I live mostly in the present, my journeys of recent times have been a search for my past. Perhaps this ripening of age is when we start to look backwards at our life. In 1999, I hiked in Newfoundland and visited with an old childhood friend in St. Johns. In 2004, I travelled to Romania with my cousin Joyce where we explored our sketchy history and our memories of our grandparents. So it is not unusual that in 2006, I would choose to re-visit an old friend in Nova Scotia I not seen in 24 years. These journeys follow no particular plan, no systematic uncovering of my adventurous life. How then did it come about? Answer: simple serendipity.

An invitation from Francene arrived from Nova Scotia via snail mail in the late spring of this year. She said that she had a cottage by a lake,

and would I like to come and visit her. It took a few months for me to reply, and by then I had misplaced the note with her new address, so I “Googled” her name, found her long list of accomplishments, mostly in government office, and the unlikely inclusion of her email address.

We first met in 1982 when I was invited by the Canadian government to speak at an International Conference on Oil and Environment, to be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. As a woman speaker at a mostly masculine, North Sea gathering, I was interviewed by the Halifax newspaper, The Mail Star, with the then (I thought) inflated heading: “Women in High Powered Positions.”

It was true that I was serving on an Offshore Oil Advisory Committee representing the Mid-Atlantic region and appointed by the White House of President Jimmy Carter, and later authored and edited the book, “The Politics of Offshore Oil.” Someone had arranged for me to speak to the wives of the North Sea representatives, and that was where I met Francene Cosman. She was formerly the elected Mayor of Bedford, a district outside of Halifax, and had recently become head of the Nova Scotia Commission on Women.

Later on, Francene was elected to the Legislature. Outspoken on women’s rights, the welfare of children, quality of education and the environment, it was no small wonder that we became friends. After all, we had nearly died together in a scary helicopter ride to the Bay of Fundy during a terrible wind storm.

The helicopter was courtesy of the (then) Premier of Nova Scotia, John Buchanan who had invited me to see his tidal power project on the Bay of Fundy with Francene Cosman as my official escort. “Don’t you remember Joan” she said during our reunion in July, “we had an emergency landing at an air force base – it took six military guys to hold the copter down with ropes, and I told you to pray, and you said, ‘if you think of a good one, let me know’.” I had

been suffering from air sickness as the tiny four-seater copter tossed wildly in the wind, and was therefore mercifully unaware of the real danger. When they finally tied the copter down, someone at the base opened the door and asked if there was anything we needed. "A lady's room," I answered, apparently worried about the embarrassment of throwing up breakfast in some dignitary's, (or any nice Canadian's) face. After wandering through a warren of air force hangars, we found the 'ladies', and I looked in the mirror at the greenness of my air sick pallor. In despair I moaned "my face is green!". Francene came to the rescue as she replied "it's just the reflection from the green walls". Humor was what bonded us as friends. Francene with her Irish-English Canadian wit, and me with my richly ironic Romanian-Jewish sense of the absurd could always find the madness in an adventure.

When we were at last deposited on terra firma, or really the rainy docks of Halifax, we both laughed in total relief, and Francene offered to take me to a tea shop with wonderful scones. From then on, we remained friends, with holiday letters to stay connected over the next quarter of a century. News of her re-marriage and travel adventures of her own kept me interested and entertained. But in 2001 I failed to hear from her, and I did wonder why. In 2002, I moved and when sending out notices of my new address, I received a startling reply from my friend in Nova Scotia. She was so relieved to learn that I was still alive. She had seen the list of those who had perished in 9/11, and found the name Goldstein from New Jersey on the list. She tried to reach me by phone, unsuccessfully, and

knowing that I used to commute to New York City, she assumed that the victim was her friend, Joan. (In fact, the tragic death of Steven Goldstein led to several phone calls and mail intended for his widow, Jill, but that is another story.)



**Joan Goldstein and Francene Cosman**

That first journey to Nova Scotia in 1982 had been a sensitive time in my life. My father had died a month earlier, and I was still very much in grief. After the conference, I knew that I wanted to be alone and peaceful and had planned to visit Prince Edward Island. There I stayed on a guest farm, walked beside the shore, painted with my watercolors

while nestled in the warmth of the dunes, and occasionally attended a church lobster dinner. It was then that I returned to Halifax and with Francene shared the "death defying" adventure in the Bay of Fundy. Two years later, in 1984, my mother passed away, and when I wrote this to Francene, she kindly invited me to visit her again in Nova Scotia. But I didn't – not then.

This July, when I walked through the gate at Halifax airport, I recognized Francene immediately. She was the tall woman with a halo of blonde-white hair waving her arms over her head like a gold medal athlete at the games. In the week that followed, I relaxed at the lake, toured with Francene's beautiful red-haired daughter Andrea and her two little daughters, Annie and Maddy, snuggled each morning with the new golden retriever puppy, and laughed with her friends Tony and later, Anne. This was a wonderful reunion, and if I can, I will return for another visit to Francene in Nova Scotia – and soon.

Joan Goldstein

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT Stanley Diamond

### LOST OPPORTUNITIES

I will never forget the time a business associate of mine, more than 30 years ago, used the words “lost opportunities”, a mantra I have been keenly aware of ever since.

He saw lost opportunities as choosing the wrong path, expending time and money in areas that would not bring about optimum results; simply stated, being diverted from an opportunity to make a significant impact on (your) underlying objectives.

In the world of genealogical research, the term “lost opportunities” can be used in a different way. I will talk about two examples of this.

**1. Not interviewing your older relatives first.** Research is different today from when I started in 1991. I didn't have the benefit – or the distraction – of the Internet. To learn about my huge and previously unknown family, I had to make phone calls and more phone calls, write letters, send faxes, and then make more phone calls. Even so, I can recall many times when someone would say, “oh, if only you had called last month, or last year, ... Aunt Fanny would have been able to tell you so much about the family. She knew everyone and remembered everything”. But his/her Aunt Fanny had passed away and I put the phone down knowing that I should have followed up on that lead a long time ago. It was another “if only” and, of course, a lost opportunity.

Today, networking is so easy that we sometimes forget the importance of face-to-face and voice-to-voice communications. When we talk to these new relatives, we often hear stories they would never put in writing or, in some cases, never

before have dared to speak about (skeletons in the closet and such).

It was good advice I was given when I first started and it is underlined in every book and article on how to start. Don't lose opportunities.

**2. Attend meetings, read that journal, check that website, order that record.** In the eleven year history of our society I have too often heard - “sorry I missed the meeting, I had to (*fill in a good reason or good excuse*) - that looked like an interesting article/journal but I never got around to reading it - there are just too many websites to read/research (so I won't look at any) - or, I meant to order that record but didn't follow up”.

In November, our society presented two related lectures on the theme of “how to present your family history”. In the first lecture, Elsa Kisber talked about the book she is writing and showed us remarkable photos and documents. In the second lecture Joe Lappin demonstrated the family videos he has created and the stories behind their development. In both cases, we not only learned how others are doing it, but were inspired to think about what we are now doing, as well as what we might do, to present our family story. Yes, you can read books about it ... but there's nothing like that ‘aha’ moment when the speaker makes a point that is particularly meaningful for you.

Every one of the JGS of Montreal lecture series meetings has something of interest to offer. It may not be specifically about your town or country of research ... but there will always be something to learn, among people who share your interest and passion.

Finally, there is something close to home.

As you may know, in November the Polish State Archives arbitrarily cancelled both the JRI-Poland project to index the Jewish records of Poland and also terminated the online order processing system that made it so easy for

researchers to order records online and pay with the convenience of credit cards. While the indices to three million records will remain online, the old system will now be back in operation. Researchers will once more have to write to the branch of the archives that has their records, wait for a reply and quotation (branches often have different price schedules), and then arrange for a bank to transfer funds in payment. Those of us who remember the old days can't imagine going back ... but it is happening.

In the few weeks since the announcement of the cancellation, many researchers have written to lament having delayed ordering their family records from the Polish State Archives. As the Executive Director of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland, all I can say is “I feel badly for you”. I have not said “you lost an opportunity” – but I could have!

When you think about it, we genealogists are trying to cram hundreds of years of family history into the far too short time allotted to us. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn and advance your research. Attend meetings, read that journal, check that website, order that record ... and do it **now!**

Stanley Diamond

## **Montreal - In Days Gone By**

### **JEWISH MONTREAL IN THE 1760s**

The history books tell the story very succinctly. On Monday 8 September 1760, General Jeffrey Amherst led his men into Montreal and proceeded to Place d'Armes, where French Governor Vaudreuil surrendered Montreal and all of New France to the English, without a shot being fired. This was but one event in the Seven Years War that was raging on both sides of the Atlantic, and ratification of the result did not come about until the Treaty of 1763.

Nonetheless, the effect on everyone in the area was felt immediately and the significance of all this for the Jews was that the stage was now set for them to settle in this territory, legally, with heads held high. Hitherto, anyone who was not a Roman Catholic was not allowed to reside in the land known as New France, but the French surrender nullified that prohibition.

Aaron Hart, a Jew, left England in 1742 heading first for Jamaica, then on to New York, before moving north with Amherst's army and riding into Montreal with him on 8 September 1760. We know that Hart was there, and it is highly likely that there were other Jews with the army of about 2000 men. We cannot be certain, but most likely to have been with them were Levy Solomons and four of his business associates, Ezekiel Solomon, Chapman Abraham, Benjamin Lyon and Gershom Levy. Their partnership had been formed in about 1756 for the purpose of supplying the British Army.

Rosh Hashanah was on Thursday 11 September, and I often wonder if the Jews managed to mark the occasion in any way.

Most of the army eventually left, but Aaron Hart stayed, and so with a whisper, Jewish Montreal became a reality. Hart accepted the task offered to him of continuing to supply the army, and chose to live in Three Rivers on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River about half way between Montreal and Quebec City.

Throughout the next decade there were perhaps a couple of dozen Jews taking their task of establishing themselves in Quebec very seriously. All of them needed to be mobile in the area, but some moved around more extensively than others. Levy Solomons was among those who resided in Montreal more or less permanently, while his presumed cousin Ezekiel Solomon was among those who travelled more often. Abraham, Lyon and Levy, while not permanent residents, were indeed in and around Montreal frequently enough to play intermittent roles in the founding of the community. Moses

Hart, Aaron’s brother, was a resident in the 1760s. And there were more Jews who can rightly be considered long-term residents. A few familiar names among them were Isaac, Samuel and Uriah Judah, Lazarus David, Abraham Franks and Andrew Hays. David Salesby Franks was in and out during these years, but from his own writings we know that he did not consider himself to be settled in Montreal until 1774. While many of these men eventually moved back to America, they did play important roles in both the Jewish and secular development of the colonies both above and below what we know call the Canadian/American border. Then, as now, cross border trade was big business.

Lazarus David brought his wife and daughter to settle in Montreal in 1762-1763. Their son, David David, was the first Jewish baby to be born in Quebec on 14 October 1764. The first Jew to die and be buried in Montreal was Lazarus David on 22 October 1776.

There are plenty of records to show that the Hart and Judah families were hard at work building up their various businesses within Quebec throughout the 1760s, as were Lazarus David, Andrew Hays and Abraham Franks. They all shared with their neighbours an interest in politics, very meaningful to this pioneering generation. Ezekiel Solomon, while connected with business in Montreal, is an example of one of the more mobile businessmen. He was a fur trader travelling as far as Fort Michilimackinac located on the straights between Lake Huron and

Lake Michigan. By 1763, Aaron Hart became postmaster at Three Rivers. He was also busily acquiring land, including 48 acres bought for £350 from the Fafard de la Framboise estate in 1764, followed seven months later by the purchase of a large section of the seigneurie of Bécancour. His fellow Jews matched him in this acquisition of property.

Quite a number of Jewish babies were born in this first decade, including Samuel and Moses David in 1766 and 1767, and Moses Hart in 1768, and Sarah Solomons in 1769 or 1770.

But perhaps the most significant Jewish “birth” was the founding in Montreal of the Corporation of Portuguese Jews, Shearith Israel, by about a dozen families on 30 December 1768. This founding of what might be called a home base, cemented a most important element in their lives. As pioneers, they naturally had the obligation to be sufficiently successful in business so that they could establish homes and all the other necessities for raising families, but they never forgot their commitment to their Jewish lifestyle.

Without these families, would Montreal have developed into the mostly-friendly Jewish centre that it is today? Of course it would.

But I’m old-fashioned enough to like looking back. Sign of aging, I suppose.

Anne Joseph

**ANNOUNCING A NEW FEATURE FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE  
ASK THE EXPERT**

My two Editorial Advisors are Stanley Diamond and Alan Greenberg. Their combined knowledge in the field of genealogy covers a huge area, and now it is your turn to test this out. Send me an email detailing your query, and we shall publish the best questions of general appeal – with response, of course – in our next issue. We shall answer any unpublished questions privately.

Anne Joseph – [aejoseph@videotron.ca](mailto:aejoseph@videotron.ca)