



# MONTREAL FORUM

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MONTREAL

## TO CATCH YOUR EYE

In March 2008, we confidently announced the deadline for the June issue. Well, what can I tell you --- it didn't happen. Why is not really important, but I can tell you that abandoning "my baby" was a step I did not undertake lightly. Montreal Forum has always meant a great deal to me, but I had to make difficult decisions in selecting what commitments needed my greatest attention. Since I felt confident that we would not have any trouble finding a new editor, I really believed that Montreal Forum would gain with fresh eyes overseeing its production. I still believe that – and our search for a new editor continues. Thanks to Alan Greenberg's offer to undertake more than just being my editorial advisor, we have come up with a summer 2009 issue.

**Stanley Diamond** tells the story of JGS Montreal's involvement in many projects past and present, a story that is encouraging for those of us in the thick of things, and hopefully will provide others with useful insight into what our society can offer researchers from far and near. **Alan Greenberg** has done yeoman service over the last few weeks updating our website, with promises of more upgrades in the reasonably near future. All this will make exploring what we have to offer much, much simpler.

**Alan** has also managed to find time to write a couple of articles for us. The first is a short, light-hearted and amazing little piece about a news source covering happenings in the lives of Jews in Canada in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His ending is quite stunning. The second is the most comprehensive account I have read anywhere of the Jewish cemeteries in Montreal, describing the location and origin of each, the number of graves, accessible information on burials and a few surprising additional insights.

**Merle Kastner** undertook the huge task of photographing gravestones in one of Montreal's largest Jewish cemeteries, and in her piece entitled A Cemetery has Life, she tells the story of her adventures as she spent an entire summer methodically making her way with her partner up and down seemingly endless rows of gravestones. And then in her second article for this issue, Merle tackles a subject dear to all our hearts, how to create your own family history book(s) in a simple, helpful and inexpensive way. We all know full well that after we die, all those databases and notes we have stored in our computers are not likely to be used as we have

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community's history. The names and dates of burial were online, but there were no photographs of the *matzevot* (tombstones).

In the summer of 2007, my partner, Amiram Gelbart, and I spent most Sunday afternoons from early June to mid-September photographing these stones, corresponding to the more than 6,750 burials recorded to date. We accomplished this huge undertaking systematically, armed with two digital cameras. This was a learning experience for both of us. We also had a few chuckles (my apologies for this irreverence!) while standing in the broiling summer sunshine, slathered with sunscreen, photographing headstones, footstones, broken stones and the like.

Of course, this activity aroused the curiosity and sometimes amusement of the occasional visitors to the cemetery. At one point, a burial was taking place and cars filled the cemetery. Curious glances were cast our way. Finally, someone asked what we were doing and we explained it to him. One wonders what his thoughts were on hearing this.

Another time, a man from Halifax had taken his elderly mother to see his father's (her husband's) grave. I offered to email him photographs and he expressed enormous gratitude, reiterated when the photos reached him the next day.

Stanley Diamond had been researching the poignant David Wald story<sup>4, 5</sup> and asked for a photograph of this particular grave. On our next photo 'shoot', we made sure to take photos of his *matzevah* and those of his parents, as well

And yes, there were some humorous stories, such as that of Sam Rosenstein who was born, married and died on the same date, but in different years (one wonders if he planned the date of his demise).

The lighter side of this exercise was a necessary evil, in order to offset the somber feelings aroused by looking at gravestone after gravestone all afternoon, all summer long – seeing the rows of tiny graves of babies and children. We saw the resting places of several members of families who all died within a short period of time, some of whom were obviously casualties of the 1918-1919 flu epidemic. During all this, we developed an intimate relationship with the cemetery and a deeper understanding of Montreal's early Jewish community - a true and rich learning experience.

The La Macaza Jewish farming colony was one of the earliest Jewish Colonization Association settlements, situated 160 kilometers north of Montreal in the Laurentians. The small number of graves in the La Macaza Jewish cemetery had to be moved to the Back River Cemetery<sup>6</sup>. Two of the names found among these are Isbitsky and Wroblewski.

We also learned about styles of headstones and how they evolved. From tall, very ornate headstones to the present-day's relatively smaller, modern ones, the designs varied greatly, as did the types of stone used. We also noticed many styles of inscriptions.

Many stones had lost their luster over the years. Some had been reduced to fragments. Others had lost components and had been worn away by the elements, as had that of my great-great-grandfather, Solomon Isaac Goldberg, buried in 1916. The two photographs on page 4 show a perfect example of this – the earlier photograph of his stone was taken in 1925, the current one, in 2007.

One was able to see how earlier, fancy stones had weathered the years - as many as 100 or more years



in some cases. Damage to many of the older ones was evident, but in recent years care was taken to restore as many as possible, or at least to pile the broken pieces with respect, in order to allow viewing of the important inscriptions.

At about the same time as I was beginning my venture into genealogy, a movement to restore the cemetery began, funded by government grants and generous donations from concerned individuals<sup>7</sup>.

The work took several years to complete. Then those fallen headstones had to be righted, and broken stones placed reverently. The lines of monuments were straightened, new foundations were poured and new sod was laid where there had been no grass for a long time or where it had been immersed in flooded, swampy areas. The results created a spectacular contrast from the

former state to the present, particularly to someone such as I, who had walked the cemetery rows many times both before and after the restoration work.

The Back River Memorial Gardens Cemetery, filled with a rich history, is alive with stories to tell – a monument to the history of Jewish Montreal.

<sup>1</sup>The Baron de Hirsch Affiliated Cemeteries manages the Back River Memorial Gardens Cemetery

<sup>2</sup><http://www.jewishgen.org/>

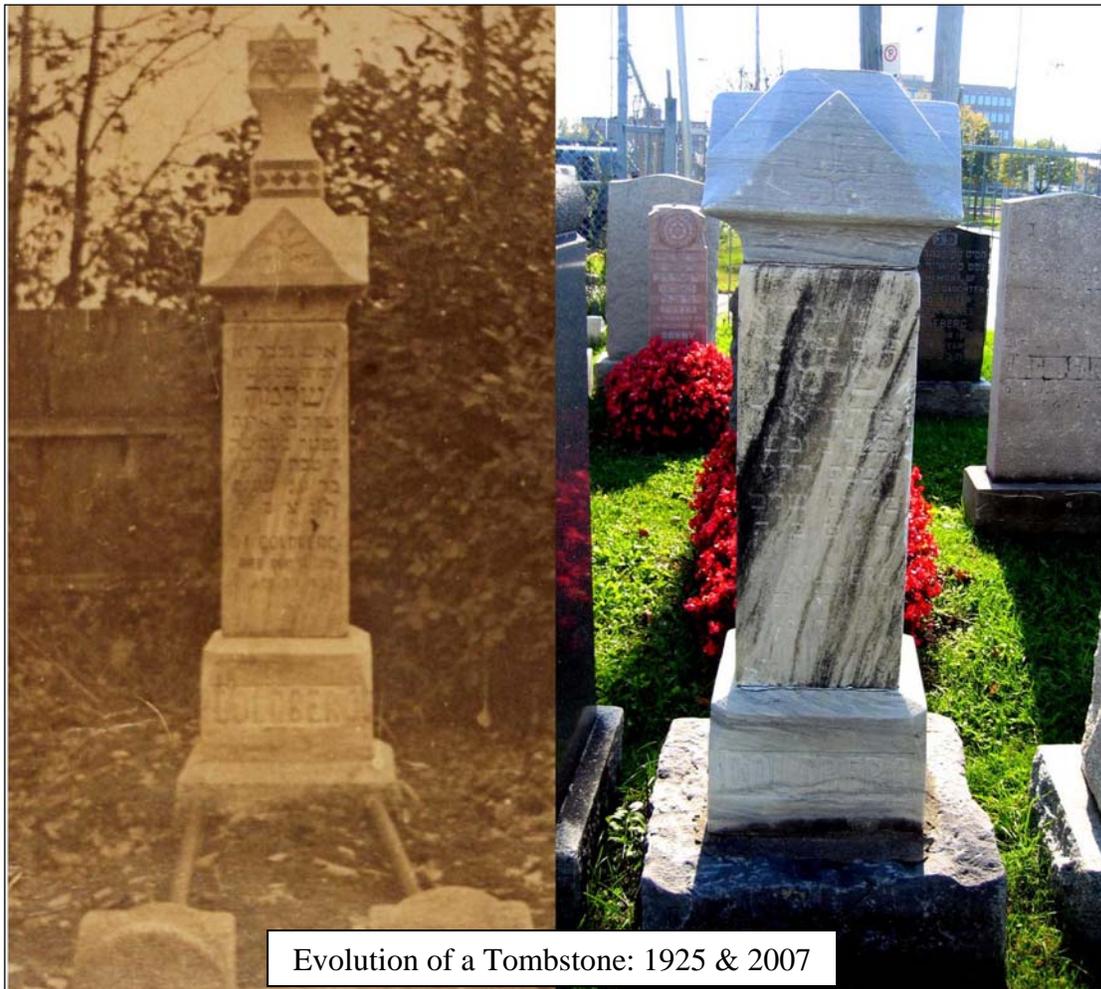
<sup>3</sup><http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/>

<sup>4</sup>Montreal Forum, Vol. 3, No. 2, December, 2007, page 5

<sup>5</sup>Canadian Jewish News, Wednesday, September 12, 2007, 29 Elul, 5767, pages 46, 47

<sup>6</sup>Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives – Collection Guide

<sup>7</sup><http://www.backrivermemorial.org/article1.htm>



Evolution of a Tombstone: 1925 & 2007

**FANTASTIC RESOURCE FOR 20<sup>th</sup>  
CENTURY RESEARCH**  
by Alan Greenberg

*The sometimes ho-hum routine of ploughing through internet sites is amply rewarded when something pops up in a totally unexpected manner. Let's not spoil the surprise revealed in this article. Whether the reader knows Alan personally or not, his sense of excitement and humour as he discovers ----- No. Read and discover for yourself.*

Some people say that I am pretty knowledgeable about Montreal Jewish family history research. On occasions when my modesty fails me, I even agree. So you can imagine my surprise when I discovered I had been giving people wrong answers for years.

But let me back up a bit.

I receive a lot of queries from people around the world who are researching their Montreal and Canadian family. One of the more common questions concerns newspaper announcements of births, marriages and deaths. My sage advice on this was generally:

- Since about 1950, many people put Jewish death announcements in the Montreal papers. Before that time, there are not a lot. Many burials took place on the day of death or the next day, families were a lot closer knit, and so announcements were not needed as much as they are now.
- Birth announcements in a similar time frame are spotty at best.
- Marriage and engagement announcements are relatively rare.

To be blunt, the "Social Notes" in the daily papers did not tend to cover the middle and working class people. And my family, as well as the families of

many of those people submitting questions, was generally covered by that broad statement.

And I was correct – regarding the daily papers.

But in my ignorance, I did not know about the Canadian Jewish Review! The Canadian Jewish Review published weekly from 1921 until 1966. It included news, many advertisements, and lots and lots of news about people. Births, engagements, marriages, deaths, unveilings, people winning prizes, entertaining, visiting – everything. It started in Toronto, but soon included Montreal as well.

As examples of the types of events covered, I will list some of my own family's records:

- All the gory details of my paternal grandparents' 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary party in 1965 - an event I attended and have the photo album of, but didn't know the names of some of the honoured guests - now I do!
- The announcement of my parents' marriage in 1941. My mother wore a white brocaded taffeta gown and carried a bouquet of white roses.
- The announcement of my great-aunt's marriage in 1924. My mother, who had just turned ten, was one of two flower girls. She wore a "frock of pale pink georgette" (I will leave it as an exercise for readers to look up what "georgette" is). The full announcement is below.

The marriage of Clara, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Lustgarten, to Mr. Hyman Mendelsohn, son of Mr. and Mrs. I. Mendelsohn, was solemnized at the Beai Jacob Synagogue on February 17, at six o'clock, with Rev. Tkatch and Rev. H. Cohen officiating. Mrs. J. Hymovitch, in a black and grey sequin gown, gave away the bride, who wore a straight-line model of white sequin with tulle sash. Her tulle veil was arranged in ~~bracket shape with clusters of ornate~~ carried a shower bouquet of Ophelia roses and lilies of the valley. The maid of honour, Miss Rae Mendelsohn, the sister of the groom, wore a beaded gown of ~~tomato red georgette~~ and carried red roses. The bridesmaids were Miss Sara Goldstein, niece of the groom, in Nile green georgette in bouffante style with bouquet of pink carnations; Miss Yetta Manis, in baby blue georgette, with pink carnations, and Miss Betty

Tomkin in a radio gown of silver cloth. The best man was Isadore Steinberg, and the ushers were Messrs. Jack Leibowitz, Jack Cohen and Lou Capelovitch. Mrs. L. Lustgarten, mother of the bride, wore a gown of black canton crepe and a corsage of red roses; and the mother of the groom wore a draped gown of black canton, with corsage of Premier roses. The flower girls, Mollie Hymovitch and little Miss Cranich, were dressed alike in dainty frocks of pale pink georgette, accordion pleated, and carried Colonial bouquets of tulips and narcissi. Dinner was served to the guests who numbered about 250. Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Mendelsohn, who are spending their honeymoon in the United States, will reside in Montreal. The out-of-town guests included Mr. and Mrs. M. Abramson and Miss Sophie Abramson of Philadelphia.

Not a bad write-up for the daughter of a possibly unemployed tailor! Like most other genealogical resources, this one will also raise new questions. Neither I nor my great-aunt's daughter may ever know why she was given away at her wedding by her sister and not by her father!

The full run of the Canadian Jewish Review (missing some years and editions) was recently digitized and is freely available online. The text has been scanned and is fully searchable. The quality is generally good and it is amazing what you can find. It is an effort of the Simon Fraser University Library, with the support of many other organizations and individuals and can be found at <http://multiculturalcanada.ca>.

Although you can search directly on the site, the process is somewhat awkward. For general queries, I suggest that you use Google, which will let you do powerful searches for individual words, combinations of words, or exact phrases (placed in quotations), all limited to just the multiculturalcanada web site. For example:

"stanley m diamond" site:multiculturalcanada.ca  
will quickly find the 1965 engagement notice for our beloved JGS-Montreal President. If you know Ruth Diamond's maiden name:

diamond peerlkamp site:multiculturalcanada.ca  
will find the same record.

**The engagement of Miss Ruth Peerlkamp, daughter of Mrs. Boekman Peerlkamp, of Amsterdam. The Netherlands, and the late Petrus Peerikamp, to Stanley M. Diamond, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Diamond, 5520 Mountain Sights Avenue, is announced. The marriage will take place in November, at Shaare Zion Synagogue.**

And a search for

"stanley diamond" site:multiculturalcanada.ca  
will turn up all sorts of interesting things about Stan. Just don't ask him about when he played Sleepy in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*.

## DAVID ROME

### Part 1 - The Accidental Archivist by Janice Rosen, Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives, Montreal

*Janice Rosen's Part 1 of this article on David Rome will also be appearing in the publication issued to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CJC, to be celebrated in Toronto on 31May - which also just happens to be the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CJC Archives Committee. More on the significance of the Archives anniversary can be found in their newsletter at [http://www.jgs-montreal.org/Newsletters/CJCCC\\_april\\_2009.pdf](http://www.jgs-montreal.org/Newsletters/CJCCC_april_2009.pdf).*

*Whether our ancestors came from Russia, Poland, Spain, or even Timbuktu, those among us who now live in Canada have a common recent ancestry with a geographic focus that is well documented and preserved in these Canadian national archives. David Rome did a great deal to make this so.*

"All roads lead to Rome", was the oft-used aphorism when David Rome was still at his desk at the CJC Archives, and all the papers that came to Rome ended up being filtered into the Archives that he built up during his tenure at CJC. Both the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives and the Jewish Public Library of Montreal are inheritors of the legacy of David Rome as archivist and administrator. Rome's "Jewish Canadiana" and "Personalalia" compilations at the CJC Archives, like those he oversaw during the 1950s and 60s at the Jewish Public Library, became the cornerstone of a collection spanning everything and everyone Jewish connected to Canada, as well as anyone outside the faith who engaged in a positive or negative sense with the Jewish community of this country.

David Rome came in contact with the CJC Archives almost immediately following his arrival in Montreal in the late 1930s, as a result of his close relationship with Hanane Meir ("H.M.") Caiserman, his mentor and sponsor on the Montreal Jewish scene. It was probably due to Caiserman that he found his first job in Montreal as head of the Poale Zion/Labour

Zionist office, and certainly due to Caiserman that his first history book *The First Two Years* found a publisher. Collecting archives had been a passion and a self-imposed mission for Caiserman ever since he took on the role of CJC's General Secretary at the founding of the organization in 1919.

By the time Rome came on the scene, historical materials had already begun to accumulate in Caiserman's office in the Baron de Hirsch building. Harry Hershman, another of CJC's founders, authored the pamphlet "Canader Yidn un zier Geshichte – a proyekt", which laid out the objectives for a Canadian Jewish historical records preservation project in 1934, while one can clearly see the influence of Caiserman and Hershman in the Resolution on Archives that was passed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> CJC Plenary Assembly during that same year.

We first see Rome among these pioneers through his activities on behalf of the CJC Archives committee formed as a result of this resolution. As the official committee secretary, he authored a report on Canadian Jewish Archives presented to CJC in 1939, and compiled an extensive list of all the materials collected up to that date. This inventory of materials is extraordinary for its high percentage of material that at the time was barely a decade old – some of it of as recent vintage as yesterday's news.

Was this collecting focus an indication that the Archives committee, which included men like Rome and B. G. Sack, both of whom were journalists as well as historians, understood that these contemporary pages were destined to be the historical documents of the future? Did their Labour Zionist orientation inspire this avant-garde de-emphasis on a few important "founding fathers" in favor of collecting the history of the common man? Not according to David Rome, who stated during an interview with Eiran Harris in the 1980s that by the time the collecting of Archives had begun at CJC, there was little original material to be found from the earliest days of Canadian Jewish settlement. Therefore the Archives committee of the 1930s was eager

to take in whatever was offered, including material that was not Canadian or, being in book form, was not technically "archives." Many of these unneeded donations would be distributed by Rome years later to other archival institutions across America.

From 1942 to the early 1950s Rome's development as an archivist was a sideline to his paid position as CJC Press Officer, where he played a major role in adding to the contemporary side of the CJC Archives by creating subject files in what he called "Jewish Canadiana." This was a function he continued in his new job across the neighborhood from 1953 to 1972, while serving as director at the Jewish Public Library of Montreal. In both his Public Relations capacity and as Library Director, Rome developed the approach that came to be one of the leitmotifs of his role as "archivist" – the tendency to avidly interview those who came under his radar, and to befriend and collect information from the new arrivals, odd ducks, poets, and hitherto undiscovered visionaries who crossed his professional path.

Despite all these on-the-job training experiences, Rome only came to officially occupy a paid post as an archivist in the early 1970s, and according to his interview statement, the job came to him more or less by accident. In fact, he claimed he was never really hired for the job at all. At the time that he parted ways with the Library in 1972, Rome came to CJC at Saul Hayes' request, as museum consultant for the Samuel Bronfman House Museum and Archives building, CJC's new national headquarters which opened in May 1970. Upon his return to the CJC building, Rome's immediate impression of the Archives was that the volunteers who were in charge there at the time were systematically destroying the collections. Interviewed by Eiran Harris 16 years later, he describes how he threw these volunteers out, even though he had no management authority over the Archives department at the time.

The CJC Archives Committee minutes of this era are concerned with the search for a professional archivist: someone with skills in Yiddish

and knowledge of Canadian Jewish history and society. The committee considered the technical aspects of the job something that could be acquired through training, once they had located a person who fit the criteria. And the person who eventually appeared to be the logical choice, the one who was called in as a consultant and “just stayed there”, as he later described it, was Rome.

How can we evaluate Rome’s legacy as an archivist? This is a difficult task for me. I worked closely with David Rome from 1986 to 1994, after coming to this career path from a background in anthropology, and know that the evolution of my “Jewish cultural conscience” came from this experience. Nonetheless, I will try to give my professional opinion.

CJCCNA’s archival collections are arranged according to two systems, with material from the Rome era organized by subject, while collections that arrived after 1980 are arranged and catalogued based on their provenance, according to standards established by Judith Nefsky, the professional archivist who was CJC’s Archives Director from 1981 - 1988.

Rome’s subject-based filing system may have been a reflection of his first ties to CJC as Press Officer, in which capacity he compiled background files to assist in CJC publicity and the editing of the Congress Bulletin. To this day, the CJCCC National Archives maintains this dual vocation of Archives and Reference Centre, as we continue to collect and file recent clippings by subject according to people’s names (still called the “Personalialia” series, as in Rome’s day) or by topic and year. Today these items are considered part of the Congress records collection and are seen as a separate category from original historical material that comes to us from private donors.

Rome’s Press Officer training, as well as his underlying vocation as an ambassador for the Jewish community, can further be seen in his occasional tendency to hide materials which he considered harmful to the community’s image, such as a negative version of the early Bronfman story, written by one of Sam’s brothers, or a

picture showing Caiserman with a well-known Communist sympathizer.

The relationship between Rome’s collecting and his writing was a close one, and very much a two-way street, as he placed into archival collections the source materials of what he wrote about, and wrote works based on what was in collections that had accumulated under his stewardship. Many times we find original historical documents and Rome’s research and manuscript notes sharing a file together. This is a very un-archival type of arrangement, but it is clearly one that suited the historian who placed them there.

Rome’s methods of collecting, classifying, and making use of archival collections are reflected in the holdings of CJCCNA and the JPL to this day, and underlie our continuing engagement with all that touches on the Jewish experience.

Teasing out the provenance and permissions associated with materials dating back to the Rome era continues to engage us at the CJC Archives. Doing so evokes for us an atmosphere when collecting Jewish Canadian archives was the activity of a few pioneers in a wilderness, while at the same time serving as a reminder to archival professionals of narrower scope of the endless adventure that documents and their owners present.

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## DAVID ROME

### Part 2 - The Not-so-Accidental Intriguing Mentor by Anne Joseph

*Among many other things, Anne Joseph is a committee member of the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives, of which Janice Rosen is Director.*

Meeting David Rome for the first time was for me somewhat intimidating. He asked to read my work, questioned my research methods, and for a moment I felt as though I had been called into the Head Master’s Study. But as I began to

challenge his challenges, we developed a good rapport. I was still pretty much at the kindergarten stage of researching Canadian Jewish history, and had thus far sought knowledge and material from only one location, the Jewish Public Library. My task, at the behest of my husband, Bill Joseph, was to enlarge upon the brief write-up I had done for him, which had been designed to place happenings in his family into context of Canadian Jewish history.

It must have been around 1990 or 1991 that I first met Rome, at which time he would have been about 80, officially retired but totally incapable of giving up his passion for collecting archival material and fostering the study of Canadian Jewish history. He was also incapable of letting a neophyte such as I race down well-trodden paths without question. He rarely “stated facts”. His method was to ask questions.

My work in research and writing up to that time had been in specific areas that fitted my employment over the years in both England and Canada. I began with medical research, specifically oncology, under the tutelage of a brilliant oncologist who taught me the whys, wherefores and importance of accuracy, as well as the most effective ways of presenting the results. Moving into industry, with better pay prospects, I switched to marketing and eventually purchasing. Although the aims in industry were quite different, the training I had received from my first employer/teacher remained with me and governed my every move.

It was in 1980 that I “sort of” retired with the aim of becoming a full-time housewife. Much as I admire women who can do this, I could not. The piles of pickles, preserves and jam grew to absurd levels, and I began all kinds of volunteer projects to provide variation in my activities. These eventually centred on history, both Jewish and Canadian.

When I began working on that first project for my husband, I naturally went to the Jewish Public Library, since libraries had been the font for most of my forays into various kinds of research. After reviewing umpteen aisles of

books, I found the Archives, and was joyously stunned. As Janice Rosen’s article makes clear, the JPL Archives originated through the efforts of Rome, and his JewCan collection filled me with many days of enchantment. There were documents and notes concerning the earliest Jewish families who settled in Quebec, not all of which matched books I had read or family folklore. In time, the archivist at JPL, Carol Katz, suggested that I enlarge my hunting ground by visiting Janice Rosen at the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives. This proved to be an excellent piece of advice. Janice had been in archives since 1986, and I found her knowledge and enthusiasm to be infectious. She gradually fed me large numbers of files and I found a great deal of mightily useful and interesting information. There were pictures, clippings, original or copied documents, notes and letters. I kept their old-fashioned and not always efficient photocopy machine going a mile a minute. Very soon she introduced me to David Rome, sitting quietly at his desk surrounded by books and papers. No fancy office: just a desk with an endless view of archival boxes and books. That, I am sure, was Rome’s idea of a blissful life.

In turn, Rome introduced me to the Canadian Jewish Archives New Series of booklets, 16 of which soon ended up on my desk at home. The content covered many of the early families and gave me great insight into my husband’s Canadian ancestors. The data in these booklets, most written by Rome, contained notes on, or transcripts of, documents from the archives, as well as narrative accounts of those early days. The more I read and the more we conversed, the more Rome would pick holes in my knowledge. This was never in a demeaning way. His style was to challenge.

One watershed conversation led to a significant change in the way I viewed all the existing data on early Canadian Jewish history. As we chatted one day, Rome broke with his usual style and “stated facts”. This was unusual enough to grab my attention. He told me that in spite of what one might read in the literature, particularly the earlier writings, the first Sephardi Jew to settle

in Quebec was Abraham de Sola in 1847. The issue was to what extent those who arrived before de Sola were long-term Sephardim, or were they demonstrating more recent adherence to the Sephardi minhag. It was not until the turn of the 20th century that the Sephardi or Ashkenazi origins of the earliest Jewish families to settle in Quebec came into question, probably triggered by the arrival in Quebec of tens of thousands of Ashkenazim from Europe who, by 1911, outnumbered the descendants of the early families by about 75 to 1. I listened with interest, puzzlement and a great deal of respect for his years of study on Quebec Jewry. David Rome expressed the view that he thought I would be able to approach the topic without prejudice and really study it seriously on the basis of known facts. On reflection, I doubt whether Rome really cared too much about whether or not these early Jewish settlers were of Sephardi or Ashkenazi origins. A Jew is a Jew is a Jew. Perhaps I am wrong, but I think he was trying to instill in me a greater understanding of the fact that, unlike the medical work that was the subject of my earliest research, historical research is rarely so clearly defined or proven. This is particularly true of family history, where

anecdotal oral tradition can be a veritable minefield for the researcher.

The last time I met David Rome was at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue on the afternoon of Thursday 20 July 1995. Janice Rosen was with him and we were all there for the funeral of Alan Rose, who had served as Executive Director of Canadian Jewish Congress for many years. By then Rome was in a wheel chair, looking very frail. Six months later, on 16 January 1996, he died at the age of 85.

Some years later Janice Rosen asked me if I would be interested in editing for publication David Rome's unfinished manuscript on Jewish cemeteries from the Maritime Provinces to British Columbia. I quickly accepted, and the editing process started with sorting his working pages before providing a sequence of descriptive narrative. Janice was enormously helpful as we put it all together with a Table of Contents and an Index.

*House of Life: A history of Jewish cemeteries in Canada* by David Rome was published in 2004 by CJC National Archives. Copies are still available through Janice Rosen, who can be contacted at [janicer@cjccc.ca](mailto:janicer@cjccc.ca).

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## CREATE YOUR OWN FAMILY HISTORY BOOK:

**Easily, inexpensively and with flexibility on your own computer, using software you already have by Merle Kastner**

*Many years ago, Merle gave me a cookbook. Not just any old cookbook, but one that she created on her home computer, at the behest of her children who were pleading with her to record old family recipes. Merle used her knowledge and creativity to produce a stunning family recipe book that was not only explicit, but illustrated with pictures and family stories. Her children – and the few of us she privileged by including us in a friendship list – became the recipients of a unique book. After the*

*cookbook, there was no stopping Merle. For her, gift giving became far less a shopping expedition for ho-hum store items, and far more a task of using her own skills to create unique, truly personal gifts to last a lifetime. As the years have gone by, her forte has become the creation of family history books, and having done so many, she is now ready to reveal the secrets of how this is done.*

We have all amassed some family details, in varying quantities. Most of us have photographs, some of which go back over 100 years, others are more recent. And, searching our memories, certain little family stories come to mind. All these items may seem sketchy, but put together form an unequalled treasure.

Genealogy is not simply about constructing family trees - it is about people, about learning

what our families were, and are, all about. The number of names we have in our family trees is unimportant, be they in the hundreds or the thousands. The dry details - names, years of birth, marriage and death - are meaningless in themselves, but become fleshed out immeasurably when little anecdotes, stories, quotes and photographs are added. Each family branch has its own personality, as has each family member.

Over these past few years, I have felt a strong urge to document what I have collected and learned – primarily for my children and grandchildren, but also for some cousins, nieces and nephews. I regard this as a legacy to my family. Many times I have heard people ask ‘Where does my family come from?’ or ‘When did they come to this country?’. Remember that when we are gone, it is unlikely that our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews will want to comb through our computers to see what we have collected. But if all these jewels are put into an attractive book, they remain easily accessible for reading when the interest does arise. With all the ‘high tech’ capabilities that we have at our disposal, there is still no denying that a hard copy book endures.

Family Books can be created for a variety of purposes: as a gift for a new baby, a Bar Mitzvah or wedding, to mark a special event, a family reunion or even as a unique ‘thank-you’ gift, to name only a few. If someone wants a copy of your book, it is easy to generate one for him or her. In printing the family tree, you can even program it to leave out current generations if you wish.

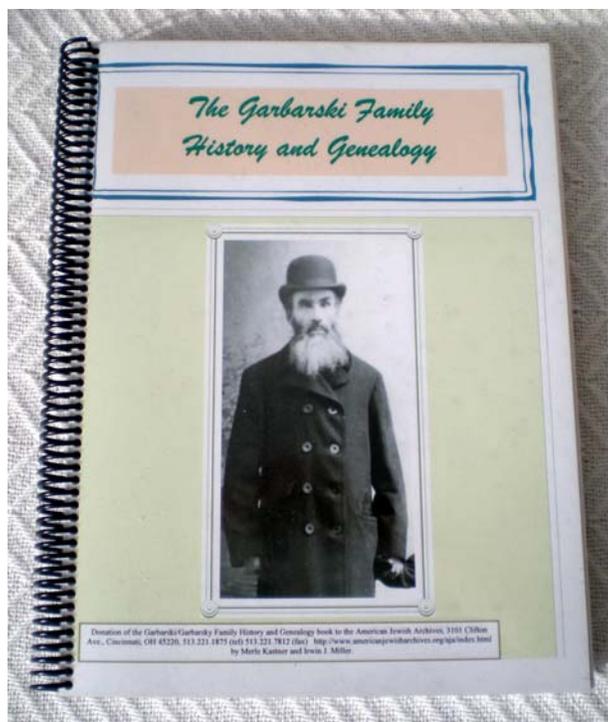
A few years ago, I visited a new-found cousin in Minneapolis. During the 3 days I spent with him and his wife, I was treated like royalty. They refused to let me buy them anything or take them to dinner. Once at home, I thought of sending flowers, but then realized that the most personal and unique gift I could give them would be a family history book. They were completely delighted with this. So much so, that they asked if I would send this cousin’s sister a copy of the book. For this version, I created a slightly different cover page, featuring the sister’s family. Recently, both of these couples had a new grandchild. And so I generated a new version of each of the two nuclear family trees, adding the new grandchildren and their photos. Then I took these new pages to the bindery and had them hole-punched and mailed them to the cousins. They took their books to the nearest

Office Depot or Staples, had the coils removed, the new pages inserted and the coils re-inserted. This demonstrates the flexibility of creating a book in this format.

And now a word about binding systems. Spiral bindings, such as I have used in my books, are manufactured by several companies, and are known as ‘coils’. One of the manufacturers is Plastikcoil®, but there are several others. Another system is ‘spiral comb binding’ known by the trade name Cerlox™, referring to long, curved shafts equipped with

curved teeth. The teeth lock into the shafts but can be opened. I prefer the spirals, or coils, which have a neater appearance and greater permanency.

But I must caution you about one thing. There are two sizes of hole-punchers and it is hard to tell the difference between them with the naked



eye. If you wish to add more pages to a book, you need to make sure that they will fit, which means that the new pages must be punched in exactly the same way as those in the original book. You can take the original book with you to make sure you are getting the same.

The cost depends on how many pages you have, what type of paper is used and the thickness of the finished book itself. The cost is also influenced by the printing of the pages themselves and the printer cartridges that are used.

For the 'cover page', I use high quality, glossy (10.5 mil) photo paper. For the inside pages, I tend to favour 'cover stock' (67 lb./148 mil), as it gives a richness and firmness to the book. For the several inside pages which contain a number of photographs, I often choose matte (61 lbs./10 mil) photo paper, which reproduces the photos very well and doesn't have the glare of glossy paper. Make sure that your printer cartridges are full before you start, in order to produce the highest quality reproduction.

As for the 'linear family outline' pages, I print out one set on ordinary photocopy stock (20 lbs./75 mil) and take it to be photocopied and collated. Doing otherwise would create an unnecessary expense and add too much thickness to the book itself. In some cases, such as my Kastner family, the linear family outline tree comprises 52 pages in a 9-pt. font! Mac users using Reunion software will find a similar feature to Family Tree Maker's Family Outline format. This is referred to as the Descendant Report.

Once prepared and printed, I assemble the pages in collated piles for taking to the binding place. In Montreal, Banner (on the corner of Paré and Décarie) has done this for me, but there are many other places where they do a very good job.

On top of the front cover, I have the bindery use a clear, plastic mylar (plastic sheet) and for the back, a rigid, coloured plastic sheet. There are some places where they have a few choices of spiral colours - white, clear, etc. I prefer clear,

but this seems to be getting more difficult to find. Most have only the traditional black, because it is more costly to stock different colours in several different sizes.

*Formatting the pages.* I like to use Microsoft Publisher for the fancy stuff, but if you don't have this software, a lot can be done very easily with Microsoft Word. Mac users have similar programs.

I like to copy and paste an image of a map in Jpeg, Tiff or Gif formats into a Word document, put a coloured border around it and then add some brief, descriptive details about the map below the image. I have used this same process for family photos and all sorts of research documents and their short descriptions. Often you can find the maps online and just save them to your hard drive for when you are ready to work with them. If not, and you have some important maps, you can scan them (or the portions of them that pertain to your own research) and use these images for this same purpose. If you find some interesting maps in a reference book in a library, try to take the best possible quality photocopy of them and then created scanned images of them when you get home. For those who don't have a scanner, you can even use the photocopies as pages in the book. Just enter the description of the image in address labels and stick them on the pages.



It does help to have Adobe PhotoShop installed, but if not, you can still do some pretty good

enhancing of the images using MS Picture and Fax Viewer. Mac users can find Adobe PhotoShop and other similar software on their systems, one of which is Graphic Converter.

To begin each section of the book, I usually have a page, entitled 'Maps' or 'Garbarski Family'.

DO show a portion, or even the whole, of a handwritten family story if you have one, as well as a transcription. This adds personality and authenticity to the story. There is nothing like reading the story in the ancestor's own words and seeing his/her own handwriting.

I have always used Family Tree Maker software for genealogy purposes. This does not mean that other software is not as good. FTM works on a PC, not on a Mac, for which Reunion is very popular. There are any number of software programs, some of which are downloadable from the internet. I have heard good things about Legacy. You can check it out at [www.legacyfamilytree.com](http://www.legacyfamilytree.com). All of these programs have features which offer similarities to, and differences from, what I am going to highlight here.

I usually use Family Tree Maker Book Format for the printed family tree. Click on the Books icon on the top of the page. There are a number of choices for formatting your family book – and if you get stuck, the Help menu offers some pretty good suggestions. If at all possible, try to add photos of the family members to your tree. People love to see this.

However, if you have a huge family tree, I would suggest using the Book Format for only the most recent generations, since the whole thing would create an enormous document. Or you could print only the first 2 generations of this family, beginning with the furthest ancestor. You will have all the information documented in the Linear Family Outline anyway.

In a number of cases, I have used the Index feature to facilitate lookups in the Book Format of the family tree for the reader. Most of the

people thumbing through the book will not recognize the connections or will need a refresher, so having an index is definitely helpful. You can program your index to have one or two columns - I found that three columns looks too crowded or doesn't work at all.

In addition to showing the entire family tree, I also insert a page showing the most recent generations, beginning with the head of a particular family group. Don't forget that people love looking at themselves and their nuclear families!

For a Baby Book, I use the Direct Descendants format of the family tree, with photos added in. I do this, showing the furthest ancestor direct to the new baby, for all branches of the baby's family. This is a wonderful gift that only you, as the family historian, can create.

In my case, a cousin in Connecticut had begun researching the Garbarski family before I came on the scene. When I began in 1993, he was delighted and wanted me to take over the job so he could go on to other things. He sent me a very sketchy, hand-drawn family tree, full of mistakes and omissions. I immediately decided to rectify this. Not long afterwards, I acquired the Family Tree Maker program and the rest is history. In the family book for that branch, I showed a portion of his original family tree.

If you have archival photos (a number of these are readily available online) and some recent photos of your ancestral town, do create a page showing these.

*Burial monuments:* this is an integral part of genealogy. If you have a picture of the furthest ancestor, definitely create a page for this. If you want to pull the heartstrings and have a picture of a cousin beside his/her ancestor's monument, you'll win points for this!

My cousin in Connecticut had organized five family reunions in different US cities and one in Montreal in 1992. They were all highly successful. Even though hardly anyone attending had more than a passing interest in the genealogical



aspect of the reunions, they adored the 'schmoozing'. Even I was only vaguely interested until the following year when my mother passed away.

After each reunion, a beautifully printed newsletter went out to all those who were on the mailing list (email was only just becoming commonplace then). If you can get even one copy of such a newsletter - if one exists for your family - I would suggest duplicating it and inserting it into the book.

*Maps:* Adding several pages of maps of different time periods of the region where your shtetl is located is great. These should be documented - the name and the source of the maps listed on the bottom of the page. In fact, the source of all information should be documented throughout.

*Census Records, Birth, Marriage, Death Records, Naturalization Documents, school records and school yearbook pages:* these personalize the family history. Just be sure to carefully document each record. And if you don't have a scanner, take high-quality laser photocopies of these and insert them in the book.

*Documenting:* instead of inserting a Text Box, you can also print mailing-sized labels with the information and affix one to each of the pages in question. This gives a neat appearance.

Do show original documents and then a synopsis or the document's translation. You might also add a map of the region highlighting the town where the event took place.

I must add that, without exception, I have sent copies of everything I have done for families with a Canadian connection to the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives in Montreal. For families with an American connection, I have sent copies to YIVO in New York City, as well as to the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati. In several cases, the Jewish Public Library also has copies.

These donations resulted in a young non-Jewish Garbarski researcher - born in Poland, living in Manchester, England, and sure that he has Jewish roots - asking me for a copy of the Garbarski book. He found the book listed on the Canadian Jewish Congress site. Janice Rosen, the Archivist, asked me if I would contact him directly. I sent him the price for reproducing the book plus the postal charges and he paid for this through Western Union. Once he received the book he emailed me, telling how delighted he was to have it. It is important to add that the family tree I inserted into the book included only the generations of deceased relatives, but showed no living generations that came later.

A footnote - another option for preserving your research data in readable form is Publishing on

Demand. However, even though it gives a more sophisticated appearance, it is more costly. It also becomes an even larger project than the one I have just described. Gary Mokotoff lists the steps for this option in Avotaynu. His article entitled "Five Steps to Publishing a Family History" appears on pages 10 and 11 of Volume XXIV, Number 4, Winter 2008.

In conclusion, the format you use for your family history book is an individual choice. The most important element is to have your information attractively documented for your family. There are no hard and fast rules for the style you choose. Use whatever software you have and use your imagination. You will find it to be fun and hugely rewarding and very much appreciated.

## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

**Stanley Diamond**

Several weeks ago, Sallyann Sack, editor of Avotaynu, the International Review of Jewish Genealogy wrote to the Presidents of IAJGS societies around the world asking about projects that their societies have undertaken. Her message was prompted by a few comments that have filtered back to her that "many people believe that geographically-based Jewish genealogy societies have outlived their usefulness." Avotaynu will be publishing an article focusing on what is unique about the individual societies and highlighting the many and various projects they have undertaken.

Sallyann's questions to me were brief. 1. What projects has your group undertaken? What is the status of these projects? What is planned for the future? 2. Where/How may the results of the finished projects be accessed? And, finally, she asked, "is there something else you would like to tell us about your group."

So, for this special edition of the Montreal Forum, I decided that it would be appropriate to share with our members and readers a condensed

version of what I proudly documented for Sallyann.

### **The Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal**

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal was founded in 1995. Although small in size, with fewer than 100 members, the Society has made significant contributions to the study of Jewish family history for both its members and genealogists - all over the world - with a Montreal connection.

The JGS of Montreal leadership brings a unique blend of experience to the Society's genealogical projects. President Stanley Diamond is the Executive Director of Jewish Records Indexing - Poland and Vice-President and Database Manager Alan Greenberg is the retired Director of Computing and Telecommunications for McGill University.

In a four-year project completed in 2002, the JGS of Montreal indexed the 1841-1942 Jewish vital records of Quebec. As the only jurisdiction in North America where, until 1994, the vital records were kept on a religious basis, Quebec is the only Canadian province or U.S. State where such a project is possible. This involved the purchase of microfilms, record-by-record data extraction, and the creation of a powerful database search capability. As a valuable addition to the basic index, when the microfilms were digitized a new project was undertaken to add father's name, mother's name, mother's maiden name and town/country of origin. After five years of diligent effort by Ruth Diamond - who also did the original data entry - this extended database is now nearing completion. The result will be an unparalleled resource for researchers tracing their roots to Quebec or endeavoring to find family members who currently reside or formerly resided in this province.

As a registered genealogical society in Quebec, the JGS of Montreal was eligible to purchase the index to *all* Marriage and Death records registered in Quebec from 1926 to 1996 inclusive. The marriage indices often include

dates/years of birth or age and the death indices may include age/years of birth, date of death, location of death as well as parents' and spouses' names. This new resource acquired in early 2008 has enabled the Society to provide an even greater level of expert Quebec-related research, perhaps unmatched by any other Society.

In 2002, the JGS of Montreal led a project to create images of the 1915-1932 naturalization records of Canada, along with a database and finding aids. The resulting work was presented to the Canadian Genealogy Center website as a gift to the people of Canada. The Center and website are a joint project of the National Archives and National Library of Canada, <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/naturalization-1915-1932/index-e.html>>. The naturalization project on the CGC website was officially launched in July 2003.

In 2009, the JGS of Montreal completed data entry of an all-name index to the 1915-1932 Canadian Naturalizations which should appear online in the summer of 2009. Also, the Society is leading a new project to create indices to the 1932-1951 Canadian Naturalizations. All 4000 pages have been scanned and will be available online as a first step to data entry of an all-name index. This project was partially funded by the IAJGS Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern Grant.

The JGS of Montreal has projects underway to index three major Who's Who publications with references to thousands of Montreal and Canadian Jews. (See "A Jewish Genealogist's Wish List," Avotaynu Spring 2003.)

The JGS of Montreal is funding the scanning of various holdings of the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives (Montreal). As an integral part of this cooperation, the JGS of Montreal will be indexing the scanned records. The Hebrew Sick Benefit Society Membership lists from 1892 to 1906 have already been indexed and plans are underway to index the balance of these records, which includes entries up to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other holdings under consideration for scanning and

indexing are the Jewish Colonization Association farm colonies files and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society Index Cards.

The JGS of Montreal has also submitted more than 50,000 entries to JewishGen's Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR) covering the burials in the two largest Jewish cemeteries in Montreal, the Back River and Baron de Hirsch. Under the leadership of JGS of Montreal Vice-President and Program Chair Merle Kastner, all 6,500 gravestones in the Back River Cemetery have been photographed and these too will become part of JOWBR. And we are now looking at indexing other Montreal area cemeteries.

Projects of the JGS of Montreal are funded through the sale of record copies and donations in appreciation for the help provided by our members. The remarkable results to date are an example of the power of cooperative effort by volunteers with a common interest and the support of generous supporters around the world who have benefited from the Society's leadership and dedication in the world of Jewish genealogy.

#### **In closing...**

I think I answered Sallyann's key question about the importance of geographically-based societies...or, in the modern vernacular, the benefit of having "boots on the ground" – people with the knowledge of what is available locally and the willingness to act on that knowledge.

I would like to make a personal observation and extend a few words of appreciation. Very little of what I described above would have been possible without the expertise, dedication and leadership of JGS of Montreal Vice President and Database Manager Alan Greenberg. On behalf of all our members, friends and appreciative researchers everywhere, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Alan for his enormous contributions to both our society and the Jewish genealogical world.

## THE JEWISH CEMETERIES OF MONTREAL

by Alan Greenberg

*As the JGS-Montreal representative most often the number one recipient of enquiries for assistance from any researcher hunting through our website, Alan has become most adept of finding answers and sorting out in his own mind the location of Montreal Jewish cemeteries and their relationship to one another. This article makes fascinating reading. His closing, with its reference to Kabbalah as it relates to Montreal's Jewish cemeteries, is truly an eye-opener.*

The JGS-Montreal's collection of over 70,000 Jewish birth, marriage and death records covering 1842-1942 is no doubt the resource that generates the most queries from genealogists around the world. The second most popular questions are some form of "How can I find my grandfather's burial" or "Do you have any burials for Slobotchnik?" The reasons vary from wanting to find a date of death or father's name, to hoping to make a connection to living family, or wanting to honour the deceased and say Kaddish. It always both surprises and pleases me when I hear of people making a special trip to Montreal or Quebec City just for the purpose of saying Kaddish.

The reasons for so many cemetery searches are not hard to understand. Montreal has had a large Jewish population for well over a century, and many North American Jews had family that either lived here, or at least passed through. Moreover, Montreal arguably has the largest percentage of nominally orthodox Jews of any city in North America. As a result, we have a very high percentage of tombstones with Hebrew inscriptions and this includes father's names and Hebrew death dates.

### The Montreal Cemeteries

Montreal and the surrounding region has nine Jewish cemeteries. Although the following description includes rough location and burial counts when known, additional details and

further resources can be found at <http://jgs-montreal.org/burials.html>.

Montreal has five older Jewish cemeteries. All are located in the middle of Montreal and all are still actively used. The largest is the Baron de Hirsch (BdH) cemetery on [de la Savanne](#) - just south-east of the intersection of the Décarie and Trans Canada Highways (Highways 15 and 40). Although it officially began operating in 1905, the oldest legible tombstone dates back to 1904. The overall cemetery includes about 120 individual sections. Many sections were created by synagogues, Sick Benefit Societies (which provided health and death benefits) or Landsmanshaftn (societies of people coming from the same geographic area). Some sections are still managed by these entities or their successors, but BdH now manages most of the sections itself. There are over 45,000 recorded burials, plus perhaps several thousand without stone markers.

The Back River Memorial Gardens, more commonly known as the Back River Cemetery was established in about 1890. It is situated in two blocks diagonally located at the corner of [Berri and Sauvé](#). Similar in concept to the de la Savanne cemetery, it is made up of various sections, but there are only 22 sections and about 6,500 marked burials. The Back River cemetery had fallen somewhat into disrepair, but the community responded to the need and it is now well maintained. As of several years ago, it is under the management of BdH.

The other three early cemeteries in Montreal are operated by Montreal's three founding synagogues. All three are adjacent to each other on the slopes of Mount Royal in the centre of the Island of Montreal. The Spanish and Portuguese - Shearith Israel - was Montreal's first synagogue and for many years was its only Sephardic one (although many of its members, particularly early ones, may well have been Ashkenazic). The synagogue was founded in 1768 and the cemetery soon after. The Congregation Shaar Hashomayim was Montreal's second synagogue, founded in 1846 as the English, German and Polish Congregation. Their

cemetery has about 6,000 burials. Lastly, the Temple Emanu-El (now the Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom following a merger) was founded in 1882 as Montreal's first (and currently only) Reform Synagogue. The cemetery is adjacent to the other two Jewish cemeteries; it is segregated from, but physically part of, the (largely Christian) Mount Royal Cemetery. All three cemeteries are located on [Chemin de la Forêt](#), a small dead-end street just off of Mount Royal Blvd.

In the 1950's, as the Jewish population moved into the suburbs, there was a need for new synagogues and therefore new cemetery sections. Several new cemeteries were consecrated in the outskirts of Montreal, each used by a number of the new synagogues as well as for expansion for older synagogues or burial societies. [Eternal Gardens Cemetery](#) located near St. Charles Blvd. in Beaconsfield in the west end of Montreal includes about 10 sections. A bit closer to Montreal is [Kehal Israel Memorial Park](#) located on Sources Road in Dollard des Ormeaux, about 22 sections. Lastly there is the [Mount Pleasant Cemetery](#) located in Duvernay, northeast of Laval which includes 16 sections.

All of these cemeteries, except the Baron de Hirsch and Back River, are adjacent to non-Jewish cemeteries. Most have separate entrances. Mount Pleasant is unique in that there is just one entrance from the road. To get to the Jewish section, you must pass two large mausoleums. And to get to the non-Jewish burial sections, you must go through the Jewish sections – truly ecumenical!

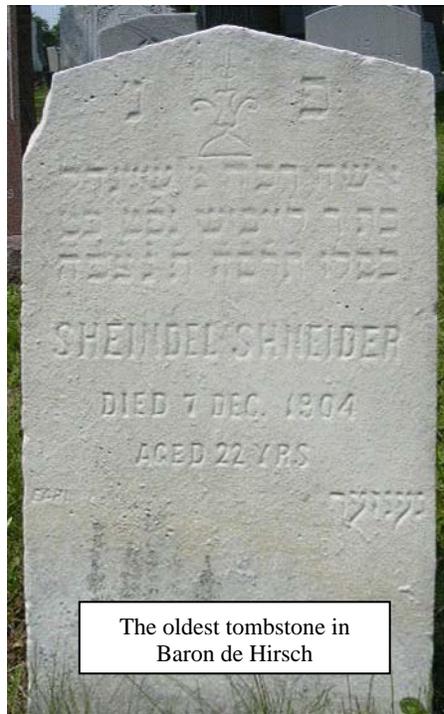
North of the Montreal, there are two small cemeteries adjacent to each other in [Ste. Sophie](#) in the Laurentians. One is the cemetery associated with a small synagogue and used by the Jewish community in this vacation

area. The other is a cemetery used exclusively by specific orthodox groups.

### Locating Burials

The 70,000 records referred to above are from the Drouin collection of all Quebec records microfilmed in 1942/43 by a French Canadian notary and genealogist, Gabriel Drouin. The books that Drouin filmed were *supposed* to include records for all births, marriages and burials registered or performed under the auspices of a church or synagogue. For reasons that will never be understood, the vast majority of burials were never recorded in these books. Of those that were registered, there is usually no indication of where the burial took place, although one can sometimes guess that if the synagogue has a cemetery it *might* be there.

Locating the details for people buried in the BdH, Back River or Ste Sophie (non-orthodox) cemeteries could not be much easier. BdH has kindly made all of their known records available



to the Jewish Genealogical Society of Montreal, and they have been donated to JewishGen's Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Records database (JOWBR). Of course, there are thousands of tombstones that are now unreadable and many thousands of graves with no stones – many of them children and babies. BdH is currently making an effort to go back to the original burial registers and record as many of these as possible. Thanks to Merle Kastner, we now have lists (and tombstone photos) of the Ste Sophie cemeteries (also on JOWBR). More recently, Merle has compiled a set of photographs for most of the Back River Cemetery (not yet publicly available).

The JGS-Montreal is working to make available information on the rest of the Montreal cemeteries. Watch our web site for further information.

**Cemeteries and Jewish Mysticism**

Cemeteries are located based on a complex set of parameters. Zoning rules, whether land can be purchased at a reasonable price, the need for good drainage, and whether the owners and neighbours *want* a cemetery there. These are all hard realities of life. But if you look at a map for the Montreal Jewish cemeteries, you would never believe that those were the considerations!

If you draw a line going exactly due north about 3.5 miles from the Baron de Hirsch cemetery, it goes right through the Back River Cemetery. Only in Montreal could the Back River Cemetery, which we all *know* is out east, really

be due north of the Baron de Hirsch Cemetery. If you continue going due north for a total 10 miles, our line just barely misses the Mount Pleasant Cemetery (the cemetery is about 1000 feet west). If you now go back to Baron de Hirsch and go due west for 7+ miles, you end up right on top of the Kehal Israel Cemetery. The three cemeteries, Kehal Israel, Baron de Hirsch and Back River form a perfect right angle triangle, with Mount Pleasant being just a tiny bit off. To make it even more interesting, the overall triangle is nearly a perfect 3-4-5 Pythagorean Triangle.

Among the teachings of Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah, is that there is no such thing as coincidence – things happen by divine design. Looking at a map of Montreal’s Jewish cemeteries, it is easy to believe.

Alan Greenberg



## MONTREAL - IN DAYS GONE BY The more things change ---- (etc.)

Gathering stories to enliven the names and dates that form the backbone of the Joseph-deSola-Pinto family history is a lot of fun. Early on, I used to smile inwardly and think 'that was then, and this is now – nothing like that would happen today'. It didn't take long to learn better.

Sometimes looking back into family history can give us hope for the future. An elderly relative recently handed me a few clippings. One segment of one of them stunned me, because like most of us these days I am very conscious of the role played in our current world economic chaos by some people in executive positions for some financial institutions. It is a long clipping, unidentified and undated, but from the text it becomes clear that it must have been published between September 1906 and January 1907, and almost certainly was from a Montreal newspaper. The article is based on an extensive interview with a prominent Montrealer in his retirement. He had been active in many business ventures, including merchandising, real estate and finance. He was socially prominent, socially active, and also dabbled around the edges of the political scene. The segment that propelled my mind into today's financial atmosphere was a direct quote, after he was asked to explain how his views formed the governing principles of his life. He said:

*I never held the office of director of a bank or other financial institution, although I had more to do than any other man of those days with the election of boards. I am a believer in minority rule and I can solemnly say that I never took a salaried public office and never touched a dollar of public money.*

*I do not think that when a bad measure is passed by a board of directors it is any excuse to say 'it was assumed by a majority'. When the Consolidated Bank went to smash some 20 years ago, and paid only \$15 for each \$100 share, several of the best men in the city were on the list of directors, but that did not save it. My idea is that no official of a company should hold a*

*proxy, because it really means that he is electing himself. The great fault with the people here now-a-days is that they don't take sufficient interest in public affairs – not even at election times. No vehicles should be used in an election. If you send a carriage for a man, you imply that you expect him to vote for you, and thus limit his freedom of action.*

*I don't think the directors of a savings bank ought to receive payment for their services ..... I knew a gentleman who had been fifty-two years president of a savings bank and never got paid ..... The money should be invested for the benefit of the depositors and not for the benefit of the stockholders (executives).*

This man's ethical and moral standards were indeed high, but he could not have been alone. The value system of such men may well have influenced at least some future political plans regulating some aspects of Canadian banking. Hopefully there are people today whose high expectations of themselves will similarly influence the future for us. Today we Canadians are exceptionally lucky because the current stringent regulations that now control our banking system have protected us from many of the troubles being experienced by other countries. We learned from the past. Yes, we are feeling some of the effects of the worldwide economic downturn, but perhaps not as badly as it could have been. It really is possible to learn from the past. And delving into family history might occasionally show the way.

Oh yes, the man I am quoting is Jacob Henry Joseph. I told you another story about him in The City Centre of Old, my piece for Montreal in Days Gone By in March 2007.

Anne Joseph