



# MONTREAL FORUM

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE  
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MONTREAL

## TO CATCH YOUR EYE

The DNA route is not one that comes readily to mind for most people involved in family history, and so the tale of one researcher's journey along this road is included in this issue. **Edward Joseph**, who is not related to me, did not shy away from this approach, and now tells us about it. We all know the excitement that comes with the promise of a major breakthrough. One such moment for me was in November 2003 when I received an email from Edward probing the possibility of a connection between his family and the Plymouth connections of my husband's ancestors. Plymouth in England, that is. Initial exchanges of information did not provide a readily apparent connection, and so it was that Edward got me hooked on the thought of DNA testing. It didn't work out the way we hoped it would, but all this did result in Edward and his wife Angela visiting me in May 2004 when I was next in England staying with my niece and nephew. A most enjoyable day, and even though I did not gain a relative, I am very happy with the gain of friendship.

**Alan Greenberg** is the man who fields all the enquiries we get as a result of the Drouin collection surname lists being on line. We had absolutely no idea what kind of response we would get, but as it has turned out, the results have been rewarding - and not without a few surprises. In this issue, Alan tells us some of the stories.

As always, **Janice Rosen** has come up with more goodies in the National Archives of Canadian Jewish Congress, and this time enlightens us about an easy way to find out more about Jewish casualties in the Canadian Armed Forces. In casual conversation with **Merle Kastner**, I asked her what she was talking about when she referred to landsmanshaften in Montreal. Her answer came in the form of an explanatory article on the topic. **Marvin Tafler** has given us a good feel for the recent IAJGS conference in his article. He made extensive notes, from which the article is taken, and has kindly agreed to make a copy of these available on request.

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of Montreal

Founded 1995

Member of the  
International Association of  
Jewish Genealogical Societies

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And this is not all. There are more of our usual features, which we hope you'll enjoy.

Anne Joseph

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 unless otherwise specified

**MONTHLY LECTURE SERIES**

**Monday 18 September 2006 at 7.30pm**

Joe King, well-know Montreal writer and raconteur, will speak on the history of the Jewish population of Montreal and Quebec.

**October 2006** – No meeting.

**Monday 13 November 2006 at 7.30pm**

How to present your family history.  
 Part 1 – in book form – Elsa Kisber.

**Monday 27 November 2006 at 7.30pm**

How to present your family history.  
 Part 2 – in video form - Joe Lapin.

**FAMILY TREE WORKSHOPS**

**Sunday 1 October 2006 - 10am to noon**

First session of the new season.

**FROM LITTLE ACORNS DO  
 LARGE TREES GROW**

My name is Edward Joseph (no relation to your editor). I was born in 1936 to a Jewish family with both sides having roots going back to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century. I still live in London, England.

In about 1990, curiosity made me start thinking about my ancestors. My father had died back in 1959, his brothers and sisters were all dead, but my mother was fully “compos mentis”. She knew all about her family and the fact that her mother’s family came over to England back in the early 1700’s. They were matzah bakers in Wentworth Street (very near Petticoat Lane in the east end of London).

I read the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain’s Digest every day, and some time ago, I came across one of the committee members who had an interest in matzah bakers. It appeared his wife was my 6<sup>th</sup> cousin (six generations to a common ancestor) and he knew nothing about our side of the family, nor I much about his. There was an interesting exchange of e-mails, but when we met, we did not have a great deal in common other than genealogy.

My father’s family was more difficult to trace. My mother knew nothing about my father’s grandparents, aunts or uncles even though there were 12 of them. It appears that when his mother married into the family there was a huge “brogus” (Yiddish for row) and all the Joseph clan would have nothing to do with his parents. So when my father got married, the wedding was boycotted. My mother therefore never knew any of my father’s relations. The only possible lead was my father’s accountant, whom my mother thought may be his second cousin. A meeting with Jack, whom I already knew, turned out to be my first breakthrough.

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He was my second cousin, once removed, and knew his family history back a couple of generations plus that of two of his grandparent's brothers and sisters down to the current times. I then contacted them and brought that part of the tree up to date. Some of them also confirmed the fact that no one from the Joseph family attended my parent's wedding.



**The matzah baker's shop in Wentworth Street, near Petticoat Lane, which belonged to Edward Joseph's maternal grandparent's family. It was established in 1710 – note sign over the door.**

With this information my curiosity grew. I started by getting copies or various marriage certificates, which give birth dates, addresses and occupations of the bride and groom plus some information about their parents. I next managed to view the original records of the New Synagogue in St Helen's, Bishopsgate, London that had been destroyed during WW2. These started when it became a statutory requirement to record all births marriages and deaths from the year 1837. Of course, had any member of the family not got married in a synagogue, I would never know. The end result was that I not only found out that my great-great-grandfather Edward Joseph was born in Portsmouth in 1826,

son of Joseph Joseph, but also, details of other members of the family who were also married there.

The next step was to trawl through the UK censuses of 1841 to 1891 (now 1901) to see if I could find out about any of my Joseph family. In those days it was by looking at microfiche film,

not on the web. This was partially successful and the tree started to grow, but there were many Josephs in the censuses. Recently the 1841 census came available on line and there are over 1200 Josephs listed in it. Later, with the help of the web and information becoming available on line, I have added a few extra names to my tree, but there are still vast gaps even though I have made a thorough search in all the censuses for Josephs who might be related.

Occasionally, one has a piece of luck. Just recently someone wishing to join the Joseph Project of the FamilyTreeDNA organisation asked me if I was related to Edward Joseph of 1826. I am and Trish, who asked, is my fourth cousin. We

have not yet met but will do so shortly. This is another piece of the jigsaw I have now found which fits.

It was not long after I started that I realised that if I did not broaden my search and keep records of other Josephs, I might not be able to join other Joseph families who were living in the UK. There was a thriving Jewish community living in Plymouth in the early 1800s providing slops to the navy, which was fighting the Napoleonic War. Slops are naval ratings clothing, as opposed to uniforms, which are worn by the officers. An Abraham Joseph was a founder of the synagogue there and the history and records of that community are very well

documented on <http://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/Susser/>. I had hoped that we were part of that family, but I am now certain it is not the case.

Toward the late 1990's, I started to use the web more, exploring Jewish databases and contacting other people who were looking for their Joseph relatives. On the Jewishgen Family Finder site, there were 259 people, and I tried to make contact with all of them. Many replied and we exchanged information, but without my finding any new family. Some of their trees were fascinating and much later some were linked up.

It also became obvious that I did not know, and could not find out, what my family name was before they arrived in England 200 years ago. I strongly believe that the name was probably changed by my first ancestor. Being Jewish, he was .... ben Joseph ....? (ben, being son of). It was only in the mid 1700s to mid 1800s that the Europeans and Russians insisted on a family name, which sometimes took the name of a town, village or trade.

Whether my roots were Ashkenazi or Sephardi, now became more important. Although Jewish, my family did not keep up the traditions, so I had no idea what our roots were. My wife's family, on the other hand, was very traditional Ashkenazi. When the opportunity arose to find out by using the DNA testing facility, I now had the ability to see if any of the Joseph descendants, with whom I was in contact, were in fact related and where my roots were. Six people joined the Joseph Project and had a DNA test done. Disappointingly, none of us matched, but we are all forever hopeful.

One's Y chromosomes (DNA) passes down the male side of a family, so my DNA is the same as my male ancestors and my male descendants for up to 40 generations with very little, if any, change. By giving permission for my results to be passed onto anyone else who also had the same 12 DNA markers, I hope to perhaps find new relatives. To date I have 75 matches to those people who have had the test.

Unfortunately, we cannot find any direct links, but it seems almost certain that my roots were from Lithuania.

On my wife's side, her roots are much more traditional and normal. Her paternal grandparents came to the UK about 100 years ago. Her grandfather married here but it is impossible to find anything about her grandmother. He came from Kovno, Lithuania about the same time and we have the family history back to about 1850. On her maternal grandparent's side, the situation is the same. He came from Poland, having changed his name from Pagurek to Green, unlike most of the family who became Page. We believe this is because when asked his name there was a discussion with immigration and someone must have said he was a "greener" (a [Yiddish] term for 'unpolished' immigrants who don't know the ropes). We have his history back to the early 1800s.

So fifteen years later, my grandchildren have a database of our family containing over 3,000 names. It covers over two hundred years and has all the information and stories I have collected covering up to 10 generations.

Good hunting to all your readers.

Edward Joseph

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### **BARON de HIRSCH AND BACK RIVER CEMETERIES DATA ONLINE**

With great pleasure, JGS-Montreal announces that the Baron de Hirsch cemetery data is now online on at the JewishGen JOWBR database at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/cemetery/>.

Also, the Back River cemetery data has been updated (including a number of previously Hebrew-only names which have now been translated). In total there are 52,200 records – 6578 for the Back River, and 45,622 for Baron de Hirsch.

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## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VITAL RECORDS RESEARCHER

by Alan Greenberg

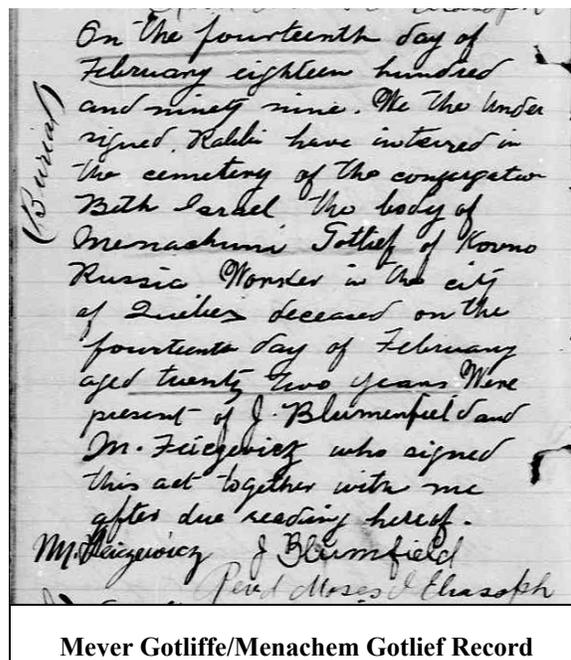
Well, actually not a single day, but I thought that was a neat title. In the four years that the JGS-Montreal has been making Montreal and Quebec vital records available, I have answered queries from about 1,000 researchers and provided records to over 250 of them. Many of these queries were rather sterile: "Please send me a list of all your Pupik records"; I send them a list of the index entries; and they do or do not later order records. But in many other cases, the request and following exchanges raise very real people-issues – some happy and some sad. I would like to share some of these with you.

For those who are not familiar with these holdings, they are copies of record books that were (supposed to be) annually submitted by synagogues to the provincial authorities. The records begin in 1842 and end in 1941 or 1942, when the books were microfilmed by French Canadian genealogist Gabriel Drouin – see <http://jgs-montreal.org/vital> for further information.

### Adoption – Montreal Style

During the 1940s and early 1950s, there was a vigorous Jewish black-market adoption business in Montreal. With the active involvement of several Jewish doctors and lawyers, newly born babies were offered to Jewish couples – often in the US. In many cases, the mothers are thought to have been unwed non-Jewish girls, but as you will see, the identity of the birth-parents is clouded in mystery. The names of the birth mothers were often falsified, and in some cases, the mother was checked into the hospital for the birth under the name of the adoptive mother. I have received a number of requests from adopted people seeking to find their birth parents. Most of them from the 1940-50 time frame bear all the signs of black-market

adoptions. Since their birth parents would be getting old by now, the "children" are increasingly desperate to find them. Unlike some jurisdictions, Quebec is not particularly receptive to such queries in the best of circumstances, and in these cases, a connection can rarely be made. It is interesting to note that nine times out of ten, the person searching for their birth parents is a woman – men do not generally seem compelled to do so.



### Family Feuds

Sometimes, families do not need the help of outsiders to destroy family ties. I have had several queries with stories such as "My mother married a non-Jew, and her family wanted no further contact with her. I recently located a cousin, but they have no interest in talking to a descendant of a disowned member of the family." Or "My parents were divorced. I lived with my mother who had no contact with my father's family. Can you help find out if my father is alive, or find other relatives?"

These types of queries can be just as heart-breaking as the ones concerning adoption. In the

first type of case, I can sometimes help find additional relatives who may be more receptive. At times, just a bit of standard genealogical technique can help – try calling another cousin – not all will be as stubborn, or try writing if a phone call didn't work (or vice versa). For the second type of query, success often depends on an equal measure of luck and how uncommon the family or given name is. Luckily, the database we use is flexible enough to let us do soundex searches as well as given name or spouse's name searches.

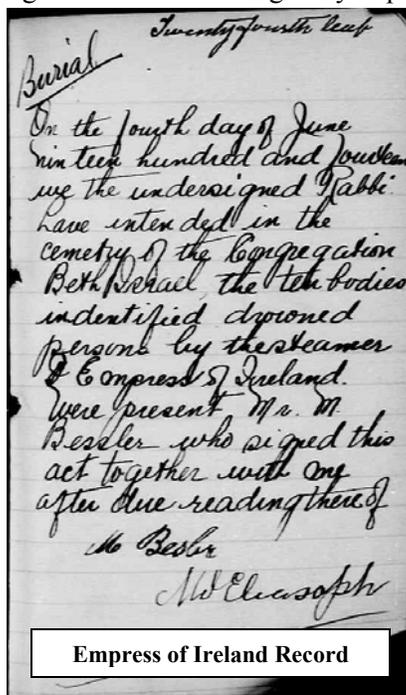
### The family name is...

There is often a lot of confusion about family names. In most cases, the records that were written by rabbis in the early 1900s had only minimal information and do not help clarify things. But occasionally, a rabbi came along who chose to include extra details. Such records will often document a family name change, or a child bearing the mother's surname (as was common for children born in Galicia). Burial records typically include just the name of the deceased and sometimes the name of the spouse, but very occasionally they will also include parent's names and birth places. In one recent query, the researcher knew that the family name was Kovensky and thought that one of the children had married a Kahn. Upon looking at the records, it became crystal clear that some (but not all) children in the family had changed their name to Kahn!

### But the name is spelled ...

Many researchers are quite convinced about how their names were spelled. However, in many case, it is more important how the name sounds, and who is doing the writing. Most Drouin records were written by a rabbi who listened to the name and often wrote it down how *he* thought it should be spelled – often quite different from how the person signed this same

record. Different family members might even spell their name differently. For people who did not originally spell their name using our



standard Roman/Latin characters (A, B, C...), often the first time their name was written using them was when a travel document was issued. A good example is the SH sound in the name FISHER of someone from Bessarabia (now Moldova, just northeast of Romania). Before leaving, their name was probably only written in Hebrew or Yiddish using a ש or in Russian using a Ш (1). If they had originally come from Romania (as many Bessarabians did), the sound would have been written as Ș (outside of

Romania this would become S). If the first time their name was written was on a ship, the employee would have written the SH sound as spelled in their own language – SH for a British ship, SCH for a German or Dutch ship. So the identical sounding name could be written FISHER, FISCHER or FISER depending on who wrote it first.

(1) These two letters look similar, and it is not a coincidence. The Cyrillic alphabet was created in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and was mostly composed of 9<sup>th</sup> century Greek characters. For those sounds which didn't exist in Greek, Hebrew characters were used – the She Ш patterned after the Hebrew ש and the Tse Ц after the Hebrew צ.

### Lest We Forget

It is traditional to remember those who have come before us, and I can personally remember the satisfaction when I discovered the burial location of my great-grandmother or the tombstone of a sister of my grandmother who had died at the age of two. I recently had a

request asking if I had any information about Meyer Gotliffe, the researcher's grandfather's brother (his great uncle) who had probably died in 1898 and was perhaps buried in Quebec City. The researcher was coming to Montreal this summer and "... would like to locate Meyer's gravestone, place a small stone on it and say a Kaddish, since no one has visited his site in more than 100 years." We did have a copy of the

burial record confirming that Menachem Gotlief had died in 1899 and was in fact buried in Quebec City. As luck would have it, I had recently purchased a book detailing all of the burials in Quebec's Congregation Beth Israel Ohev Sholem Cemetery (2). A quick check not only confirmed the burial but provided

the exact grave location and an overall map of the cemetery. Maps.google.com readily gave the location within Quebec City. The trip was made earlier this summer, and Kaddish said for Meyer for the first time in many decades or perhaps 100 years. As often happens when I am helping researchers, I learned something new. Immediately beside Meyer's grave is the mass grave of nine or ten unidentified but presumed Jewish passengers from the sinking of the Empress of Ireland in 1914 – one of the world's worst but least-known peacetime maritime disasters – 1012 lives were lost including 840 passengers (8 more than were lost on the Titanic two years earlier).

(2) W.-Richard, Guy, *Le Cimetière juif de Québec – Beth Israël Ohev Sholom*, 2000, Les Editions du Septentrion.

### Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

We started the Drouin record indexing project because we thought there was a need. But it was not clear exactly how it would help people. Some of the quotes that follow may give an inkling of how it has helped people in the last four years.

*"Alan – We have success!!! How thrilled I am – my great grandfather and grandmother are Benjamin (Bennie on the sheet) and Sarah!!!"*

*"At last, I have found some [...] information on my father!"*

In response to a query about a family that lost contact with each other early in the century, sent



**Two monuments on left with greenery between them are for the Empress of Ireland. The larger one in the middle is for Meyer Gotliffe**

by a friend: *"I can't tell you how much this information means to us! [...] And the information on Sarah's maiden name is nothing short of miraculous. I did not think I was going to find that out. My friend will be over the moon with this information. I am going to print out your letter and reread it several times.*

*This is nothing short of amazing."*

*"Your information is and will be extremely helpful in our family research and on behalf of my sister and our children, I thank you for your time and effort! Your service was truly amazing and the work much appreciated. I know that information will certainly be treasured for generations to come."*

### Was it worth it?

Ruth Diamond put several years of work into indexing the Drouin Montreal and Quebec Jewish vital records and is now continuing the task by reviewing all records to add parents' names to the index. Creating the index database, doing searches, answering questions and trying to hand out sage advice has been a time-consuming task for me. But there is no doubt that it has been both interesting and satisfying, and I look forward to the next round of e-mails!

Alan Greenberg

**BURIAL SITES AND MORE  
CAN BE FOUND AT NEW  
CANADIAN JEWISH  
CASUALTIES IN THE  
CANADIAN ARMED FORCES  
WEB DATABASE**

**by Janice Rosen  
Archives Director  
Canadian Jewish Congress**



Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives has added a new feature to the CJC web site, called **Canadian Jewish Casualties in the Canadian Armed Forces**. Located at <http://www.cjc.ca/archives/casualties.php>, this is a multi-faceted searchable list of Canadian Jewish Servicemen death and burial site information for both World Wars and the Korean War.

Even before going online, the database has proved helpful for many types of research. It has been used by genealogists and family history researchers, as well as by those interested in documenting the history of specific battles and military units. The information provided

includes the soldier's name, rank and enlistment number, unit, birth and death dates, burial location details, and often additional comments about the serviceman's background and the circumstances under which he died.

The database can be searched alphabetically by name, or by keyword in any field. While the additional comments for each entry can only be seen from the main table by clicking on the last name, those wishing to review the entire database including additional comments on a single page can access a linked [plaintext version](#) of the data as well.

Many interesting and poignant details can be found in the additional details field. Note, for example, the entry for Edgar Hyman Goldstein, a gunner with the Canadian Field Artillery. He was from Montreal, Quebec, where he enlisted in March 1916. "His first stripes, given up voluntarily when he left for France, he regained on the Somme Front when attached to a Howitzer Battery of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division. He refused a medal offered him for distinguished service, saying that he was no braver than others and that all had done their best, and was recommended for a lieutenancy. He was killed at the Battle of Loos, Aug. 15<sup>th</sup> 1917, at the age of twenty years, on the very day of his departure for England to take up his commission, after ten months continuous service at the Front, including action at Courcellette, the Somme, Albert, Arras, Vimy Ridge and Lens" (*The Jew in Canada*).

The wealth of data was compiled and assembled by H el ene Vall ee, Archives Assistant, with the help of CJC Archives volunteers Abe Bonder and Willie Glaser, and Gordon Jenkins of Ottawa. Their sources of information included CJCNA's War Efforts department records, the Casualties volume of CJC's *Canadian Jews in World War II* by David Rome, *The British Jewry Book of Honour* and Hart's *The Jew in Canada* (1926). They were also helped by the web sites of the [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#)

(CWGC), the [Canadian Virtual War Memorial](#), and [Soldiers of the First World War \(Library and Archives Canada\)](#) with whom the CJC Archives has often exchanged information.

The Casualties database research was initially undertaken in response to concern over non-Jewish military burial markers voiced to CJC's National office by several Jewish veterans and their family members, most notably Larry G. Rosenthal of Montreal, who discovered that his brother William Guy, who died in a World War II battle in Italy, did not have the proper inscription on his tombstone. As is their policy in these cases, when contacted by the family Canada's War Graves Commission made the change without charge.

With the database now online, those who plan to include a visit to a military cemetery in their travels can print a list of all known Jewish burials in that location, and later report back to us if they find any errors.

The CJCNA casualties list will soon be lined to the new website of Toronto's Jewish veterans group, and we encourage any other veteran's groups with a web presence to do so as well.

For comments and queries, please contact: Janice Rosen [janicer@cjc.ca](mailto:janicer@cjc.ca) or H el ene Vall e [helenev@cjc.ca](mailto:helenev@cjc.ca)  
Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives  
Tel: 514-931-7531 extension 2.

Janice Rosen

*Postscript - When Janice and I were planning for this article, I expressed interest in the theme, since it is something I feel we should all be trying to remember with greater clarity. Janice promised "a Montreal connection" to illustrate the potential of the online data. I giggled when it arrived. Janice had absolutely no idea that Edgar Goldstein was a 1<sup>st</sup> cousin once removed of my husband's. That family seems to have tentacles wiggling around just about everywhere!*



**Edgar Hyman Goldstein**  
27 Dec 1896 – 15 Aug 1917

*I had not (and still have not) tracked down much information about Edgar. To my amazement people in the family know little or nothing about him, when I thought that everyone involved in that terrible war would have been remembered with a mixture of pride and sadness for what might have been.*

*Edgar was born on 27 December 1896 in Montreal to Jacob and Ida Hyman Goldstein. He was three years younger than his twin sisters. He celebrated his Bar Mitzvah on Saturday 25 December 1909 at Temple Emanu-El in Westmount, and his parents were 'at home' the following day to mark the occasion.*

*Edgar's sister Dorothy married Max Grossman, and when their son was born on 3 June 1920, they named him Edgar Hyman.*

AJ

## LANDSMANSHAFTEN IN MONTREAL

**their purpose, their function  
and where they are today  
by Merle Kastner**

What does this word mean? The Italians have a word *paesano*, the Jews *landsmen*, both of which mean someone who comes from the same town, shtetl or city. The word *shaft* means society. Therefore *landsmanshaft* means society of fellow natives, the plural of this being *landsmanshaften*.

Landsmanshaften in Montreal were founded by immigrants and run on a volunteer basis. These particular groups saw their beginnings in those waves of Eastern European immigration to Canada which took place at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and again following World War II. Their purpose was to assist newcomers in the difficult integration process to the new country, provide

social and cultural activities for their brethren, and assistance to widows and the sick. Loans were made available to those who needed them and often medical help would be arranged. Some extended their aid to labour union strikers, a large number founded synagogues for their own groups and almost always, burial societies. A large majority of these groups conducted their business in Yiddish, some mixed with a little English. Others used a mix of languages from their own original birthplaces.

The beginnings of many mutual aid societies were based on ideological principles, such as the Workmen's Circle, known as being somewhat socialist in its views. Others were political in their focus. Most other societies were founded on mutual origins in shtetls or regions. Following World War II, some societies were founded by concentration camp survivors in an effort to commemorate those who perished.

Almost without exception, landsmanshaftens' social evenings or outings doubled as charitable events. Relief was often sent to former homelands in an effort to assist those left behind. Before World War II, many societies worked to aid Jews remaining in countries threatened by the Nazi machine. Following the Second World War, help was provided to refugees in their attempts to search for relatives, working with international organizations such as the World Jewish Congress and the International Red Cross. Aid was sent by some Landsmanshaften to help Soviet Jews during the 1960s.

Following World War II, the former importance of the Landsmanshaften waned and by November 2000, the list of such societies in Montreal read as shown in the boxed listing. This was in sharp contrast to the large number that had previously been in operation.

An important caveat: while former residents of the same shtetl or region were usually grouped together in these Landsmanshaften, burial in their cemetery sections did not necessarily signify that the deceased was a true landsman.

**MONTREAL LANDSMANSHAFTEN  
November 2000**

1. Assoc. of Survivors of Nazi Oppression – Men
2. Assoc. of Survivors of Nazi Oppression – Women
3. Association of Zaglember Jews of Montreal
4. Bergen-Belsen Association
5. Canadian Federation of Lithuanian Jews
6. Chelemer Society
7. Czenstochover Society
8. Federation of Wolynian Jews of Montreal
9. German Jewish Heritage Association
10. Hebrew Sick Benefit Association of Montreal
11. Hungarian Martyrs' Synagogue
12. Knights of Pythias
13. Krakower Society of Montreal
14. Labour Zionist Alliance
15. Les Amis de France et de Belgique
16. Lodzer Society
17. Lubliner Landsmanshaften
18. Piotrokov Trybunalski & Vicinity Landsmanshaft
19. Radomer Mutual Aid Society
20. Russian Polish Hebrew Association
21. Stolin & Vicinity Memorial Association
22. Tarnover Landsmanshaft of Montreal
23. United Bukoviner Association of Canada
24. Vilna & Vicinity Association
25. Wloclawker - Kitner Landsmanshaft
26. Workman's Circle Arthur Zygelboim Branch 264
27. Zamosc Landsmanshaft
28. Zawiercier Society

He may have been a husband whose wife came from a particular shtetl, a relative by marriage, a cousin of a relative by marriage, a former neighbour or even a good friend who just needed a burial plot to spare his family the necessity of finding one at the time of his death.

For further information, please contact Janice Rosen, CJC Archives Director, at 514-931-7531 extn 2, or email [archives@cjc.ca](mailto:archives@cjc.ca). Assistance is obtaining information for this article has been provided by CJC Archives Director Janice, CJC Archives Assistant Avrum Shtern, and by Saul Klarer of JGS-Montreal.

Merle Kastner

## Montreal - In Days Gone By

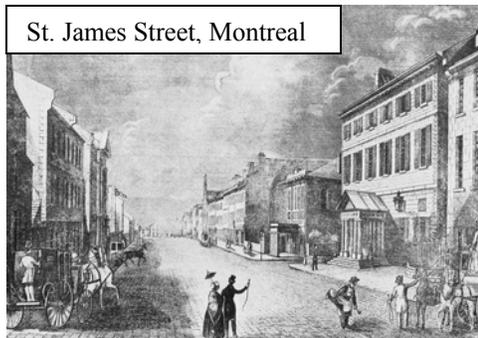
*In this continuing series of anecdotes from the lives of Montrealers in years long gone, we have so far taken a couple of brief looks at the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This time we flip back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century as we glance at a few moments from the life of-----*

**Eleazar David** (8 June 1811 – 1 February 1887)

This man's life was certainly an interesting one. Trudging through dry data about antecedents can get rather – well yes, dull. Eleazar was definitely not ho-hum, and searching out his story lightened things up for a while. After a few more “good” stories in future issues, maybe I'll tell you about another antecedent who was a guest of Queen Victoria in H.M. Prison at Dartmoor, or one of the earliest divorce stories that rocked the Canadian Jewish community.

Back to Eleazar. Both his grandfathers were Canadian patriarchs from two of the earliest Jewish families to settle in Lower Canada, Lazarus David in 1762/63 and Aaron Hart in 1760. Phoebe David, featured in September 2005, was his grandmother. Much was expected of him, but as it turned out his life was most liberally sprinkled with ups and downs – military distinction and matrimonial scandal being the two most often cited.

Eleazar was attracted to the military, and began his service during the 1820's with the Royal Montreal Cavalry. At the same time he was able to study law and was called to the bar in 1832. Captain David served with distinction in the rebellion of 1837. Soon afterwards, Captain David continued his service with distinction at the battle of Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu, where he received a field promotion to Major. He was in command of 20 troopers who acted as dispatch bearers and reconnaissance men. At one point, his horse was shot from under him.



Life changed dramatically for Eleazar David on the evening of Thursday 14 May 1840, when at the age of almost 29, he fled to the United States with Eliza Locke Walker, wife of Captain Henry William Harris of the 24<sup>th</sup> Regiment stationed in Montreal, and her month-old baby, whom David later acknowledged to be his child. Their relationship had been going on since early 1838,

and their exile from Montreal lasted throughout the next decade. Living on David's private income, they spent their time in the United States, France, Italy and the West Indies. As one of Eleazar's nieces wrote of him *A thorn to my family was Eleazar David, Mother's eldest brother. He had begun life so well, but military life & fast ways soon marred him & then he eloped with the wife of Captain Harris.*

The family returned to Montreal, newly married, in 1850. With them were their six children, and thereafter they proceeded to add another five to the family. Eleazar resumed his law practice and also resumed his military career as Major in the Montreal Cavalry.

Money was always a problem, having been drained of much of his independent means during exile, and never quite being able to curb his extravagant lifestyle. Then in 1873, he was convicted of embezzling money from a pension fund for retired pilots (sea version, not air pilots!). But whatever else one may think of Eleazar and Eliza, they certainly stuck together through thick and thin for the best part of half a century.

And oh yes, the family connection. Eleazar David's sister Sophia married my husband's great grandfather, Abraham Joseph. That makes Eleazar Bill's great grand-uncle.

Anne Joseph

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**THE IAJGS CONFERENCE  
HELD IN NEW YORK  
AUGUST 2006  
by Marvin Tafler**

Each year a Jewish genealogy conference is held under the banner of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies. This year's conference was hosted, funded and run by New York's Jewish Genealogical Society (JGS-NY).

**Different categories of attendees**

There were many different categories of people who attended the conference like the following:

1. Those studying own family
2. Members of a SIG or other research group
3. President or executive of a local JGS
4. Member of the board of IAJGS
5. Presenters
6. Volunteers including organizers of tours and cemetery visits
7. Those involved in movies
8. Representatives of "suppliers" i.e. vendors

Some attendees are in several categories such as Stanley Diamond who is interested in his own family, is President of JGS Montreal, is Executive Director of JRI-Poland and is involved in genealogical research related to genetics. If a beginner like myself finds the week very hectic, one can only imagine what the week is like for those wearing "many hats".

**Overwhelming**

If you selected almost any one of the sessions or movies and invited the speaker to a local JGS or other monthly meeting, together with handouts and discussion, it would be a very worthwhile meaningful meeting. During 5½ days at the IAJGS conference in NY, there were over 140 sessions, 22 movies plus a lot of other activities. Quite overwhelming is one way to describe the conference as it is impossible to absorb

everything, or even a significant amount, of what was presented. The biggest dilemma was to pick and choose from a full schedule.

**Computer labs**

The computer sessions were well organized, had good leaders, were well equipped and it must have been quite costly to rent, set up and maintain all the computers and equipment. It was also very popular as the sessions were mostly sold out, as computer knowledge is very helpful in doing genealogy work.

However, I do not think these sessions belong at an IAJGS conference for two reasons. Firstly it does not make sense to me to have a session at a conference that limits attendance to approximately 25 people when the overall attendance at the conference is 1,400. Secondly and more important, the conference has a multitude of very well prepared excellent sessions given by experts in the field and this opportunity does not come about very often. In every city, there are hundreds or thousands of people who can teach computer programs such as Word, Excel and Power Point, that it does not seem logical to use IAJGS conference time in the area of computers.

**Cost of conference**

Although the overall cost including travel, hotel and meals is high, the amount actual conference cost that attendees paid to attend the conference was a real bargain – \$215 (spouse \$150 extra). Some of the things the attendees get is an internet site that included a lot of information about the conference, over 140 sessions to choose from, 22 very good or excellent free movies, five hands-on computer labs every day, "business meetings" including SIG groups, JRI-Poland, research groups, JewishGen, IAJGS etc., many places to visit in NYC that are associated with Jewish Genealogy, free concerts, a four inch binder with a treasure trove of information, many handouts and some presentations on the internet, ability to talk with other genealogists at

all levels to ask question and just freely exchange information, free usage of computers connected to the internet, free access to Ancestry.com, free assistance from Ancestry.com experts and free access to a special IAJGS library. An MP3 CD which includes the recording of approximately 140 sessions was available for \$109 extra.

If the conference was organized by a company in the business of organizing conferences for a profit, the cost could have easily been \$5,000 to \$10,000 per person for the week, whereas we only had to pay \$215 to attend. A hell of a deal!

### Contributions to conference

The ability to keep the cost to only \$215 is because the JGS-NY received over 100 cash donations, a few in excess of \$1000, most presenters bore all of their own costs associated with coming to the conference, and at least 133 people volunteered to help with the conference.

### Exceptional lecturers

What is fascinating in reading the “speaker’s bios” is to read page after page of so many speakers who have such impressive credentials. I find it amazing that the conference organizers could gather such an impressive group of speakers. It was always difficult to choose which session to go to.

### What did I learn?

In each and every session I learned something of interest. Some of the sessions were basically a repeat of sessions given in Las Vegas in 2005, but I found them helpful as a refresher and also the material was updated. Some were of general interest and some gave me clues and information directly related to the four families I am researching. I met two people at the conference who may provide me with considerable help in getting information about my family and one of these people may even be related through a common ancestor who never came to Canada. I

have also noted the names and coordinates of the experts who I may contact at some future time.

### Deal of the week

Miriam Weiner wrote two books (Jewish Roots in Poland and Jewish Roots in Ukraine and Moldova), one of which was on sale for \$40 and the other which is out of print is selling for \$2,000 on the internet. I quickly bought the one selling for \$40 and saved \$1,960 by not waiting until it is out of stock.

### Montreal

Someone at the conference in NY mentioned that they felt Montreal would be an excellent choice for a conference and that this had been suggested many times to a member of JGS of Montreal who I will leave nameless. The response was “over my dead body”. I do not understand this comment. It normally takes at least 100 very industrious, talented, experienced and competent volunteers to organize and manage such an event, but I feel confident that if Stanley Diamond, Alan Greenberg and Merle Kastner plus a few others put their efforts behind such an event, they could certainly handle it.

I was told that the budget was \$750,000 for such a conference. I am sure the JGS of Montreal contingency fund can bridge the financing and cover any shortfall.

Marvin Tafler

*Associate Editor’s Comment: \$750,000 is certainly in excess of the actual costs of such a conference, but after checking the JGS-M finances, our reserves may be able to cover 0.1% of this amount.*

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF MONTREAL FORUM IS 15 NOVEMBER**

**IN CLOSING - - - A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT**

We Canadians are a proud people! We feel good about ourselves, and the Canadian maple leaf that we display as we travel distinguishes us as citizens of a highly respected nation. Canadian Jewish genealogists rightly share in this pride. In the few years since the founding of the first Canadian Jewish genealogical societies, we have left our marks. What follows is a selection of just a few of our contributions.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) hosted two IAJGS Conferences in 1993 and 2002, and in 2000 won the IAJGS award for Outstanding Project that Advances the Objectives of Jewish Genealogy. The Toronto society has created indices of burials in major cemeteries and donated them to JOWBR (Jewishgen Online Worldwide Burial Registry). Bill Gladstone, past President, has just published "Roots & Remembrance: Explorations in Jewish Genealogy", based on his column that appears in the Canadian Jewish News. Long-time member Glen Eker has published indices of Jewish entries in Canadian censuses from 1861 to 1901 and Newfoundland censuses of 1921, 1935 and 1945 as well as An Index of Land Claim Certificates of Upper Canada.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Ottawa won the 2002 IAJGS Outstanding Project Award for the Chernivtsi Cemetery Project, has an ongoing project to photograph and index Jewish cemeteries in Ottawa and small towns in Eastern Ontario, and has funded the indexing of early 20<sup>th</sup> century obituaries in the Keneder Odler (Montreal Jewish Eagle Yiddish newspaper). Founding president Lawrence Tapper is the author of "Biographical Dictionary of Canadian Jewry: 1909-1914."

Cissie Eppel, founding president of The Jewish Genealogical Institute of British Columbia, is among a large number of JGS society members across the country who have published books on their own family history.

The JGS of Montreal is also proud of its record, starting with the 2003 IAJGS Outstanding Project Award for the indexing of the 1841-1942 Jewish vital records of Quebec. Many genealogists around the world have benefited from this and hundreds of records have been ordered. We also created indices to the 1815-1932 Canadian Naturalizations and donated them to the website of the Canadian Genealogy Centre (Archives & Library Canada). In 2005, we received the IAJGS Stern Award for the second phase of the Canadian Naturalization project from 1933 to 1952. And last year we funded the indexing of the Hebrew Sick Benefit Society records from 1896 to 1910 at the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives. Earlier this year we submitted more than 60,000 burials from the Baron de Hirsch and Back River Cemeteries to JOWBR. As Executive Director of Jewish Records Indexing – Poland, I am personally proud of both the 1999 IAJGS award for Outstanding Contribution via the Internet and as the recipient of the 2002 IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award.

What about the future? In an effort to both spark increased volunteerism and recognize the efforts and accomplishments of our genealogists across Canada, I recently proposed the creation of the Canadian Jewish Genealogy awards. A white paper outlining this proposal was written by Anne Joseph, which was discussed at the meeting of Canadians at the IAJGS conference.

While there was general consensus as to the value and appropriateness of such awards, further development of the idea will depend on input and a vote from all Canadian societies.

For now, just remember that the best reward is the sense of satisfaction and achievement which comes from giving your time and effort for the benefit of all!

Stanley Diamond