



MONTREAL FORUM

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE
JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF MONTREAL

TO CATCH YOUR EYE

Most of us tumble into this all-consuming hobby of family history accidentally. We come across an old letter that contains intriguing information about an ancestor, or a birth certificate, or a list of a grandfather’s siblings, or – or – or. We pop all these bits into an envelope, file folder or box. Then it happens. The collection grows, and you need to organize your papers in a better way, which somehow goes through many changes before the task of storage itself, and knowing what you have stored, becomes overwhelming.

And the worst thing is that when you are working in an archive or library, you cannot possibly remember all the details of what you have stacked away at home.

Jeremy Frankel has developed a system using Excel that serves to streamline his knowledge of much of his material into an easy access format. His article is well worth reading and re-reading in order to come up with ideas for your own specific needs. I can hardly wait to finish putting this issue of Montreal Forum into circulation so that I can start my own Excel storage records.

In his President’s Message, **Stanley Diamond** opens our minds to what might be for many of us unexplored avenues for the pursuit of mightily interesting family history. Remember, it is often the simple ideas that promise the greatest and most unexpected bounty.

As she joyfully hunted through the indexed 1911 Canadian Census, **Judy Winstan Brandspigel** found expected information, followed by tantalizing hints of what turned out to be a (so far) unfathomable mystery. She shares her story with us in this issue.

And **Merle Kastner** has another tale for us of amazing coincidences uncovered as she responded to what at first seemed like a simple request from another genealogist.

Anne Joseph

Jewish Genealogical Society
of Montreal

Founded 1995

Member of the
International Association of
Jewish Genealogical Societies

Web Site

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

Mailing Address

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

Hot Line: 514-484-0969

President.....Stanley Diamond
smsdiamond@aol.com 514-484-0100

Programme.....Merle Kastner
merlek@videotron.ca 514-735-4739

Membership.....Jerry Zell
jjzell@videotron.ca 514-486-2171

Database Manager
& Webmaster.....Alan Greenberg
alan.greenberg@mcgill.ca 514-483-3853

Editor.....Anne Joseph
aejoseph@videotron.ca 514-487-1214

PROGRAMMING

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

MONTHLY LECTURE SERIES

Tuesday 20 March 2007 at 7.00pm sharp

Group visit to the Mormon Family History Centre in LaSalle. Register with Merle for this guided tour.

Sunday 25 March 2007

JGS-Montreal members will be participating in Israel Day at Cavendish Mall.

Monday 16 April 2007 at 7.30pm

Judy & Myer Gordon will speak on “Two Jewish Orphanages in Montreal in the 1920s and 1930s”.

Monday 21 May 2007 at 7.00pm sharp

Dr. Stephen P. Morse will speak on his famous One-Step method of searching for genealogical data. This programme will be held at the Cote St Luc Public Library Auditorium.

SUNDAY FAMILY TREE WORKSHOPS

Held at the Jewish Public Library,
 5151 Cote Ste Catherine Road, Montreal
 10am to noon
 Sunday 11 March
 Sunday 1 April
 Sunday 6 May

USING EXCEL FOR GENEALOGY

by Jeremy G. Frankel

Jeremy has worn many hats during his eclectic career; from cartographer and land surveyor, to historian and author (New York State Canal Guide: the first book for boaters to the Erie Canal). Jeremy then worked as the Executive Director for a non-profit in upstate New York on a canal restoration project. The local county then employed him for three years in a records management programme collating and cataloging 180 years of county records. Jeremy also spent ten years researching the 20th century development of Edgware, the London suburb where he grew up. For the past twenty plus years Jeremy has been researching his Frankel, Goldrath, Koenigsberg and Levy ancestry. He is the President of the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society and a professional genealogist.

As an avid user of Excel for genealogy, I thought it might be useful to pass along some tips of why and how I use it. If you are not familiar with Excel, let me explain; this is a spreadsheet application. When one opens a new spreadsheet, you are confronted with a page that is full of little boxes in rows and columns. These are technically known as cells. Originally, spreadsheets were designed for bookkeepers and accountants for managing business finances, putting a number in each cell. With Excel one can combine cells using mathematical formulae and display the results in another cell. A spreadsheet can consist of more than one “sheet” and one can link different sheets and have the results on one sheet reflected in a cell in another sheet. But that is not what I am going to discuss here. I am not going to describe using numbers or mathematical formulae, but using cells for words.

The principle reason I like using Excel is because it can handle large amounts of data, which you can see (mostly) all at once on your screen. You can set up each vertical column of cells so that they can contain the same kind of data. One

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
To Catch Your Eye -----	1
Programming -----	2
Using Excel for Genealogy by Jeremy G. Frankel -----	2
President’s Message by Stanley Diamond -----	6
Mysteries in the 1911 Canadian Census by Judy Winstan Brandspigel -----	8
Montreal – In Days Gone By The City Centre of Old -----	9
Responding to Requests Reaps Rich Rewards by Merle Kastner-----	10

column could be last names, another first names, and so on. The beauty of Excel (one of many) is that you don't have to enter the information in any order but of course like data must be entered in its named column; i.e. all first names go in the same column, all last names in the same column. The reason for not worrying about the A-Z order is because you can "sort" the columns and have data in either ascending or descending order. Of course it all depends upon what you want to use the spreadsheet for. I will discuss sorting later on. Once you have inputted all the data, the next time you wish to enter some new information, you can insert a new line in the right place and type it right there.

I use Excel as a management tool for several projects, one of which is vital records. I happen to have 157 birth, marriage and death certificates. Although I keep all the originals in archival enclosures, and have a photocopied set, this doesn't help me when I am away from my office working in a library or academic institution and need to refer to someone's information.

So I created three Excel spreadsheets, one each for birth, marriage, and death. Each column relates to each kind of information contained on each certificate. Taking birth certificates as an example, I have a column for the year (easier to sort than having the complete date, but more on that later). I have the registration district, county, certificate number, when born, where born, first name, last name, name of father, occupation, and so on. I think you get the drift.

If you already have a pile of certificates, it's easy enough to open up a new spreadsheet, create the column headings then begin entering all the data (or as much as you feel you want) on each line. You don't have to type each certificate in order, because at the end you can click on the DATA pull-down menu, select SORT and then decide the priority of one column over another. For example, it would make sense to have a spreadsheet organized by last name. On the other hand, if you have many certificates with

the same last name, you could have a spreadsheet just for that last name and do a sort by first name.

I should also mention here that once you begin generating a dataset which is bigger than the height of the screen, the headings will obviously scroll up and off the screen. This can be a problem for us older folks whose memory retention is temporary, but Excel offers a wonderful solution, you can "freeze" the heading row(s) so that they always appear at the top while the dataset columns and rows scroll up out of view.

In my version of Excel (official declaration here: I'm a MAC user) there is a coloured button above the right hand slide bar. If you click and hold down using your mouse or trackpad, you can slide this button down and a gray line will follow down the spreadsheet. Select the lines (above it) that you want to freeze, unclick then go to the Window menu item and select "freeze pane". Now your heading will always stay in view as you scroll up and down.

Another way I use Excel is for maintaining my ever-growing list of street addresses. You come across addresses in all sorts of places; censuses, city directories, correspondence, BMD certificates, newspapers and so forth. Again you can create a database and enter all the information with columns for the address. I even have a column for the street number (because more than one family could live on the same street). I also include the town and country, the source of the information, the date of that source and the resource, and the actual facility where this record exists. Currently my address spreadsheet runs to 708 lines of entries and thirteen columns.

I actually maintain two versions of this spreadsheet, one is A-Z by street address and the other is by the family's last name. You only have to update one spreadsheet, save it, then do a re-sort and save that one with a new name. With this second spreadsheet, sorted by last

name, then first name, then street name, you can follow the history of where and when families lived at certain addresses. This ability to sort using different priorities may also provide research clues and insights where to search next.

Sorting is very easily achieved. Simply click on the menu bar drop-down labeled DATA and one of the options is SORT. Click on this and a window will appear with three sort priorities, A, B and C. Against each field is an up/down button and by clicking on this you can select the column you want. So, when converting an address book spreadsheet to one prioritized by family name, for the first priority select the column letter which contains the family last name, then select the column letter which contains the first name, and finally select the column letter (or column name) which contains the street name. Click OK and voila, you now have a re-sorted spreadsheet. Now go ahead, save and rename it.

Although this is a historical address book, don't forget you can use it to create a current address book. I have several; one for family, one for friends, one for genealogy libraries and institutions. It's obvious that you can get really carried away here, organizing your life in cells!

The Jewish Chronicle is the world's oldest English-language Jewish newspaper still in publication, having begun in 1841. One reason for its importance is because of the various life events reported as paid notices, although they really didn't become popular until the mid 1880s. By 1900 they were featured on the first three pages of the paper. Family events were also listed on the inside Social Pages, albeit at a slightly higher price.

Most of my genealogy has to do with London where many of my families lived, and a number of them made use of the JC to place notices of events ranging from birth, through bar-mitzvah, engagement and marriage, death and tombstone consecration. To date I have 599 entries, with the Koenigsberg family alone providing 216

entries. I didn't realize it at the time, but when in 2002 I placed an entry in the paper recognizing my parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary, it turned out to be my 500th entry. It really surprised my mother as she woke up to congratulatory calls that morning not knowing who had advertised the occasion. Her early morning call to me soon located the culprit!

As well as paid notices, there could be articles and news stories. Additionally, because of the charitable nature of Jews, there were often many charities requesting donations for causes at home and abroad. Some issues of the "JC" listed columns and columns of people's names and the amount they donated. Sometimes the names were grouped by synagogue name. As you can appreciate, a plethora of information can be contained within the pages of the JC for anyone with British ancestry.

The Jewish Chronicle spreadsheet columns include: year, last name, parents/spouse, person, issue date, even type, and notes. The parents/spouse column is dependant upon the person for which the event is about. If it is a child, then I put down the parents names. If it is one spouse, then I put down the name of the other spouse.

Dates present a problem because normal international genealogical convention calls for the event to be recorded by dd/mmm/yyyy, with the day and year written as numbers and the month as the first three letters of the word. Obviously one cannot sort this way. Even setting up any other way can cause confusion. This is why, as well as the column and the complete dates, I also include a column that contains just the year. I could have created three columns for the day, month and year, but I personally didn't think it was necessary to go to such lengths.

During a recent project I encountered a problem where a city directory I needed to look at was either not in a collection or the page(s) were missing. The question I asked myself, "which institution

has a copy”, rapidly morphed into “which institutions have which years of all the city directories for that city”.

Right now I am in the middle of doing this with the San Francisco city directories. These run from 1850 to the 1980s. There are seven institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area who have large collections of SF city directories, but no institution has a complete collection. Obviously if you are following a family year by year, then you may have to go to several institutions to see them all.

I have made a spreadsheet that lists the year, name of directory, then seven columns for each

institution (I put a check mark in the cell if an institution has that directory), and then a comments column. When completed, I hope to have this uploaded to a local genealogical society’s web site.

In closing I hope I have explained succinctly just how useful Excel can be; not only for handling large amounts of data, but in the ways that dataset can be re-sorted to emphasize a different perspective, which may help tease out a clue or appreciate something about a family which wasn’t obvious before.

Jeremy G. Frankel

Our regular feature from
Janice Rosen
Archives Director
of Canadian Jewish Congress
Charities Committee
National Archives in Montreal
is not available for this issue
but will be resumed in June



**27th IAJGS International
Conference on Jewish Genealogy**
Sunday, July 15—Friday, July 20
Hilton City Center
Salt Lake City, Utah

ASK THE EXPERT

The brand new column that had been scheduled for inauguration in this issue.

My two Editorial Advisors, Stanley Diamond and Alan Greenberg, were metaphorically in the starting gate. Questions were in and suggestions were being formulated. Then fate intervened. Stan has been dealing with some rather annoying health problems, and Alan has been abroad so much on important business projects that they were unable to put their column together.

The happiest news for everyone is that Stanley is gradually feeling better. And Alan is back in Canada, at least for a little while. The column will appear in June.

Stanley had been working on his President’s Message before being sidelined. This begins on page 6, and is filled with important, feasible ideas for extending our family research successes.

Don’t forget to send in more questions for **ASK THE EXPERT**.

Email me at aejoseph@videotron.ca

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Stanley Diamond

PHOTOS AND FAMILY NEWSLETTERS

We genealogists know the power of networking – reaching out to our fellow researchers with whom we share an interest in the same towns and families. We also know the feeling of frustration when unresponsive members of our own family don't share our passion. Yet, whether they know it or not, most of these very same people are, in one way or another, family historians who need to be prompted and encouraged.

That's the challenge for each one of us. What can we do to draw in those who can indeed benefit themselves from our research, and at the same time contribute to the work we are doing. So, who are these latent genealogists and how do we get them going?

In the December edition of Montreal Forum, I ended my message with: "When you think of it, we genealogists are trying to cram hundreds of years of family history into the far too short time allotted to us. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn and advance your research. Attend meetings, read that journal, check that website, order that record... and do it **now!**"

The above words were addressed to you and your fellow genealogists. But, there are others in the community to whom we need to convey the message – our relatives and friends who have never considered, much less got around to, recording their family histories.

Almost everyone has old photo albums passed on by a parent or grandparent, boxes of slides from the days when slides were the fashion, shoe cartons with prints and negatives that have accumulated over the years and now, digital images stored on CDs, DVDs and hard drives.

While they may not be declared genealogists, custodians of family photo treasures are, in some ways, family historians.

In this brief message, I would like to suggest one way to bring in those family members who are potentially such a great resource, and that's by creating a "family association", or as some of us call it, "a cousins club".

Simply stated, a family association is an organization typically created by those who share a common ancestor. They get together so that they can share memories and information about their ancestors, news about living family members, and hopefully plan for the day when a family reunion will be held.

Some family associations have very broad goals and others may prefer to concentrate on only their direct line. After a number of years (of research) the goals may change or expand.

A family association needs a starting point from which it can develop, and I suggest that that could be a family newsletter. When I first started in my genealogical quest, I put out two editions of a WIDELEC (and variation) family newsletter, mailed to cousins far and wide. But, with my early involvement in so many genealogical activities outside of my family, and perhaps coinciding with the founding of the JGS of Montreal (I was warned!), the newsletter that I had hoped would be the forerunner of a family association withered on the vine. With modern technology, publishing and distributing family newsletters has become a simple matter.

People like to see their names in print, so reach out to them and before you know it, there will be questions, newspaper clippings, wills, family trees, announcements of births, bar/bat mitzvahs, marriages and deaths and even the unfolding of some long-standing mystery or hidden secret. That's lots of meat for creating both a topical newsletter and a historical journal about your family. But most of all, there will be

photographs - because everyone has them. Today, with scanners and digital cameras, it's easier to share photos than ever before. So, photos of ancestors or your current nuclear family could well be the starting point for your outreach to your extended family.

A few years ago, Gary Schroder, President of the Quebec Family History Society, phoned in great excitement to tell me about one of the most exhilarating experiences he has had in his years of research. It's a story Gary includes in many of his lectures.

A man with whom Gary shares many relatives invited him to visit. While Gary was hoping to get some interesting family photos, much to his surprise it was an unexpected goldmine, a "trunk full of old photos". It was before digital cameras so Gary spent hours at a copy centre making laser photocopies. The photos opened up many new avenues of research and gave him the opportunity to share the faces of ancestors that many of his family had never seen.

Perhaps a few of us will be so lucky as to find a trunk full of our family's old photos. But, you never know! So get to work on collecting photos and sharing them with your family – perhaps in a newsletter. Newsletters may not be a "requirement" for researching your family history, but publishing one might enable you to stir the interest of other family members; and soon you may be receiving unexpected surprises and invaluable help with your research!

Stanley Diamond

EDITORIAL NOTE: As I mentioned briefly in my To Catch Your Eye column on page one, Stanley's message once again explores new ways to not only gather more information, but to do so in a most enjoyable way. If we don't have fun as we pursue our genealogical goals, there really is no point in doing it at all.

Stan's newsletter suggestion set my mind going a mile a minute. Back in 1896, a schoolboy in the Joseph family prepared a small newsletter to be distributed throughout the family for Purim. He wrote in a lighthearted manner of happenings at home and news from distant cousins. He called his newsletter The Moon, and little did he know that his idea would catch on to such a degree that the 112th annual edition of The Moon has just been released. Today, well over 120 family households each receive a printed copy, which has grown to 142 pages.

I don't have a complete set of all past issues, but I do have an entire file drawer stuffed with them. And the information I have culled from all this data is phenomenal.

So ----- for the next edition of Montreal Forum, I would like to put together a piece on what many of you, our readers wherever you are, do in terms of creating some kind of family association .

Please, please – pretty pretty please – do send me an email telling me what your relatives do to strengthen family bonds.

AJ

**Unless otherwise stated for a specified item,
the content of this journal may be reproduced for non-commercial use,
provided acknowledgement is given to the author and to the Montreal Forum.**

Advice by e-mail of such usage would be appreciated.

**MYSTERIES
IN THE
1911 CANADIAN CENSUS
by
Judy Winstan Brandspigel**

When the 1911 census was released and then finally indexed, I was delighted. I easily found the entry for my paternal Grandparents. There they were: my Grandfather Julius, my Grandmother Sarah, their daughter Lea age 1 year, and, who was this? Another daughter...Maraleh! Had I at last found proof of the elusive Maraleh?

An aunt had told me that there had been a child whom she believed had died in Europe before my Grandmother had emigrated; I had recently come across some information from Latvia that led me to believe that her name had been Maraleh. No wonder the Latvian archives had found no record of her death. (But they also had found no record of her birth!) But now, here she was in the census. She must have been brought to Canada! I quickly scrolled my computer screen over to see the rest of the entry. But what was this? Age 6 days? Surely there was some mistake. In 1911 she should have been 5 or 6 years old if she were alive. What happened to her? When did she die? Then it hit me. My Father was born April 30, 1911. The census was done early in May. This had to be his record. I double-checked. Maraleh-female-age 6 days. Where was the entry for my Father? Why this discrepancy?

I can only theorize.

Because my Father was only 6 days old, he had not yet been named. Perhaps, because they had indeed lost a child in Europe, they did not want to "tempt the Evil Eye" and so gave the authorities the name of a dead child. Who knows what superstitions they

had. When I find my Grandmother's immigration records and the ship's passenger list, perhaps they will give me some answers. Until then, all I have are puzzling questions.

I went on to look again at census records for my maternal Grandparents. I found them, their oldest daughter born in 1910, and then an entry for someone named Matthew, with the same last name, age 17, listed as my Grandfather's brother. As far as I know my Grandfather did not have a brother who immigrated to Canada. My Mother and her siblings have never heard of one either. So who was this?

Again, I can only theorize.

My grandfather had a nephew, his sister's son (with a different surname) who briefly lived with him, but his name wasn't Matthew (or any Yiddish variant of it). The age and time frame seem to match, however. Perhaps there was a communication problem with answering the census questions. Maybe they couldn't say nephew, so they said brother. Perhaps he wasn't supposed to be living there so they gave a false name. I guess I'll never know. But I *will* have to rule out (or in) the very slim possibility that there might have been a brother that no one ever knew about!

Once again, more questions than answers.

It's these unfathomable mysteries that make genealogy fascinating!

Judy Winstan Brandspigel

Don't give up:
Winners never quit – Quitters never win.

Montreal – In Days Gone By The City Centre of Old

At one point in the 1850s, a Montreal Jew bought a large tract of land encompassing most of the district bounded on the north by Cathcart, on the east by St. Monique, on the south by Lagauchetiere, and on the west by Mansfield, with Dorchester intersecting east to west, for £4,800. St. Monique Street has disappeared, and been replaced – roughly – by University Street. After selectively selling about half the land, this man built a home for himself on a huge chunk of the still large plot south of Dorchester. The man's name was Jacob Henry Joseph, and he called his new home Dorchester House.

In 1860, the family moved into their new home. By now Jacob and his wife, Sara, had two sons, four daughters, lots of cats and dogs, and a suitably large household to care for them all. The irregularly shaped house stood, for the most part, three stories high over a basement, with a wing two stories high jutting out westward. Trees and flower beds could be seen from Dorchester Street through the railings, but more than three-quarters of the garden was behind the house. Scattered throughout were many majestic trees, as well as fruit trees, including apple, pear and plum. There was a vinery, a vegetable garden with every known, and many then unknown, vegetables, a paddock for a cow, a hay field, a tennis court and plenty of flowers. There were croquet parties in the early years, and then tennis, all of which made this garden a most enjoyable place.

Jacob died at Dorchester House exactly 100 years ago, on 28 February 1907. Sara had died three years earlier, and their elder son took over the house, but not for long. The gigantic real



estate deal that culminated in the destruction of this home was about to begin. By 1911, the Canadian Northern Railway was planning to bring its tracks into the heart of the city. The idea was to bring railway tracks into Montreal from the north, through a tunnel under Mount Royal, emerging into a terminal at the heart of the downtown district. Initially the plan was to buy the block just north of Ste Catherine Street, but news leaked out with the inevitable result that speculators drove property prices sky high.

This glitch led the planners to turn their attention towards another site extending southward from Cathcart down to Lagauchetiere between Mansfield and St. Monique. The first big deal was when Jacob's son sold the property to the Mackenzie and Mann syndicate. There are two reports of the selling price, one at \$2.60 per square foot, and another at a total of \$300,000. Melding these reports would put the size of the plot – maybe – at 115,385 square feet. The uncertainty surrounding this estimate is that the reports do not specify how the value of the house entered the picture. Remember, the house itself was scheduled for demolition. The family moved out of Dorchester House in 1913.

Postscript: the grandiose plans of the Canadian Northern sank into insolvency, and in time, the railroad company disappeared within Canadian National Railways. The site known locally as “the big hole” remained through the Depression years. Decades passed before a revision of the initial project took shape. Work on the Central Station complex began in 1943, and in time the Queen Elizabeth Hotel was added in 1958, and the central building of Place Ville Marie was first occupied in 1961.

Anne Joseph

**RESPONDING TO REQUESTS
REAPS RICH REWARDS**
by Merle Kastner

A subscriber to the daily online JewishGen Discussion Group list, I often see posts asking for someone to take photographs of cemetery stones in a specific city. I have posted such requests myself on several occasions, always with responses from other genealogists eager to help.

Whenever there are similar requests for photographs of stones in Montreal cemeteries, I always offer to do it. There is no other 'place' where people offer to help one another with no expectation of compensation as there is in the genealogy world. As the saying goes, 'what goes around, comes around'.

The story demonstrates just how surprisingly events sometimes turn out – to the benefit of both parties. It all began with this post on JewishGen:

Date: Sat, 4 Nov 2006

Subject: Montreal and Boston exchange of services:

I wonder if there is a Montrealer out there who would be willing to take some photographs of several matzevahs and a monument at the Mount Royal Cemetery in Montreal, in exchange for my doing a reasonably similar service in the Boston area. Please respond privately. Alan Radack, Swampscott, MA alrack@comcast.net

I immediately responded to Alan's request by telling him that I would be glad to do this for him, but had no need for anything in Boston.

And then on Mon, 6 Nov 2006:

Dear Merle, Thanks you so much for responding so positively to my note. I know from email correspondence with Bette at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom of Montreal that Alfred Zion, his brother Sam Zion, and Alfred's wife Ruth are

buried at the Mount Royal Cemetery in Montreal. I was told that there is a monument. I hope there are matzevahs.

Alan added:

From Bette of Temple Emanu-El: '...Mrs. Ellen Lyons, the daughter of Alfred and Ruth Zion, lives in London, England. She is our contact person re: care of the cemetery plots.' She had forwarded my request for 'info' about the Zions to Mrs. Lyons in London. I have not heard from her....

Surfacing now were coincidences that surprised both of us. My maternal grandmother, Minnie Goldberg Nathanson, died in 1960 at the age of 63. The following year my grandfather, Henry Nathanson, married a most charming widow whom we all adored – her name was Vangie Zion. Her son and daughter-in-law were Alfred and Ruth Zion, very warm people whom I remember well. Sadly Vangie passed away two short years after the marriage.

Alan went on to add some background to his family history:

My wife's grandmother, Bessie Hoffman (Shatanoff) emigrated to the USA in 1905 from Golobvenevsk, Uman, Ukraine, Russia. Up to this point, I have been unable to track her three sisters who married Canadian men and lived in, I guess, Montreal. I also knew that there was a cousin that she (Bessie) kept in touch with...Minnie Zion of Montreal...

There was a Vangie Zion at our wedding in 1956. From Vangie's address (in Lovell's Montreal Directories), I learned that she gave the same address (the company address) as Sam, Alfred and Ruth Zion. The Zions were principals in the Dominion Lock Co. of Montreal. Also from these directories, I learned that Minnie Zion was Sam's wife.

Perplexing questions were – who was Minnie Zion, where was she buried, and was she buried in Montreal at all? Calls to all the available local sources for this information yielded nothing.

Armed with my digital camera, I easily found the monument in the cemetery. An imposing stone, which listed the names Sam Zion, Miriam Nathanson, Ruth Zion and Alfred Zion, along with their birth and death dates. Unfortunately there were no footstones, no Hebrew inscriptions and therefore no mention of fathers' names or Hebrew dates.

I was struck by the name, Miriam Nathanson - by coincidence my late mother's maiden name. However this added an interesting piece to the puzzle - when Vangie Zion married my grandfather, her name became Vangie Nathanson. Could this Miriam also have been known as Vangie? It seemed so, as the death date on the monument was given as 1963, the same as Vangie's. Something told me to call Paperman & Sons, the largest and most commonly used Jewish funeral home in Montreal, and ask for a burial certificate for Miriam Nathanson.

On 22 Nov 2006, I wrote:

Hi Alan, I picked up the extract (of the burial certificate of Miriam Zion Nathanson) at Paperman's... Looking at the facts on the document, it has become clear that Vangie, Miriam and Minnie were one and the same person. I seem to recall my mother telling me this many years ago. She was only 70 yrs old when she died. She seem ancient to me at that time, but today 70 seems awfully young!

On 27 Nov 2006, Alan wrote:

Hi Merle, The Paperman's certificate arrived (in the mail) today. Thanks! I remain very pleasantly surprised that I had their Manifest and 'kinda' knew about them all along. I'm thinking now that Vangie's sisters also married Canadian men as the family story goes.

He (Sam) gave a different ship and an earlier arrival (one month) than something I just found. On the Morse one-step site, looking at the 1890-1891 arrivals database by Relles, I found four Zions arriving in September 1891.... I am making the assumption that Sam went up to

Montreal in the twenties and being technically very astute, developed the Dominion Lock Co.

Then soon after, from Alan:

Hi Merle, I can't get over it.... The pictures.... The burial certificate.... Thank you, thank you! I have a passenger manifest that I've had in my 'Montreal' Zion file. When Louise's grandfather and grandmother and all the Hoffman (Goichman) children arrived in NYC in 1906.... Their destination was Boston and an uncle on Poplar Street. His name was Chaikel Schwartzman.

Later I found a passenger manifest of a Charles Schwartzman arriving in Boston in 1899 with a destination of Cambridgeport, MA (near Harvard University). His wife was Lina. They had five children, four girls and a boy. An 11-year old girl was Minna Schwartzman. I was never sure who this Schwartzman was, and now at least this much is clear. I've had this manifest all along and never knew it was Minnie. It's even possible that, as the family story goes, the girls married Canadian men... That's what I love about family research... one set of facts and findings leads - who knows where?

On 29 Nov 2006, I wrote:

Hi Alan, I'm glad you received the certificate. If you think that Vangie's sisters also married Montreal area men, you could try looking on the JGS of Montreal website to see if the names are listed in the Quebec Vital Records. Then you could order the records and you'd really have some goodies.

Then on 1 Dec 2006 I received this astounding message from Alan:

Hi Merle, Just to bring you up to date on the Zions.... It had never occurred to me to search for the Zions any other place than Montreal... and so I didn't. After finding out so much about Vangie and her family, thanks to your help, I had a thought. I looked for passenger arrivals in NYC and found 3 manifests. In 1912 Sam Zion arrived in NY from the Panama Canal Zone... single, a US citizen.

Two manifests from 1915. The first, Minnie arriving from the Canal Zone with 2-year old Alfred in tow and a little later, Sam Zion also returning from the Zone. I made the correct assumption that Sam and Minnie had married in late 1912 and Alfred was born 9 months later.

They then show up as a family living in Roxbury, MA in the 1920 census, Sam working in the Boston Navy yard as a draughtsman or engineer. Of course Minnie's cousin and my mother-in-law Sadie also lived in Roxbury at that time... Then I looked up the 1910 US census and found Sam and a brother Bernard living with his mother Leah and (their) stepfather, Joseph Cuzyke, on Harrison Avenue in Boston. (Sam's) occupation – civil engineer. These censuses give me a date of arrival of 1891 and naturalization of 1911. I have the papers.

On 28 Dec 2006, Alan related some further discoveries:

Dear Merle, Since we last 'spoke', I've found that Minnie Zion's 3 sisters and a brother were really all sisters. A 1910 census was found with the Schwartzman spelling as 'Swartzman'; Ette is now Ethel, Sarah is now Sadie, Frances (in the manifest a son) is still Frances and (is now) female... Ciby is Celia. Three additional daughters arrived the year prior to this (1898) – Regina, Bercha and Berta... all older.

And in this same email:

...in addition Berta and Celia appear in the Boston Jewish Advocate database as being married and with their husbands' names... Celia marries Jack Lechtzier from Winnipeg, Canada – and from another database that you mentioned, is buried many years later as Mrs. Jacob Lexier in Calgary... the marriage database shows that, in 1906, Berta's husband, Jacob Cohen, is from Panama. Is it a coincidence that Minnie meets Sam Zion who works in the Canal Zone?

In the end Alan and I, total strangers at first and living in different cities, found that we have a common family connection and a most interesting one, thanks to genealogy.

Merle Kastner

Sources:

<http://www.jewishgen.org/JewishGen/DiscussionGroup.htm#subscribe>

Tombstones

<http://bibnum2.bnquebec.ca/bna/lovell/index.html>

Paperman & Sons, 3888 Jean Talon West, Montreal, Quebec, H3R 2G8 Tel: (514)733-7101 information@paperman.com

<http://jgs-montreal.org/>

While we, the Montreal Forum editorial trio, endeavour to ensure that all information presented in our publication is accurate, we wish to remind our readers that we cannot guarantee it.

**DEADLINE FOR THE
JUNE 2007 ISSUE
MONDAY 14 MAY 2007**