

# HEBREW MERCHANTS

## A History of Perth's Jewish Community

Occasional Jewish peddlers first visited Perth in the mid 19th century, usually arriving via steamboat at Oliver's Landing (Rideau Ferry) and catching a hotel coach into town. These itinerant salesmen, carrying enormous packs on their backs, were young men who then set out along the district's back roads, calling at farms and rural hamlets proffering small items designed to catch the eye of buyers who only infrequently visited stores in a town - picture frames, pins, needles, threads, buttons, lace, tablecloths, sheets, pillowcases, eyeglasses, suspenders, jewelry, oilcloth, combs, hair brushes, clothes brushes, tooth brushes, razors, carpet slippers, snuffboxes, tobacco, stationery, cutlery, kitchenware and more. Of these men, some were buyers as well as sellers. Those hired a horse and wagon at the local livery stable and, as they toured the countryside peddling, they also bought bones, rags, metal, paper, glass, cattle hides, horsehair, or anything that could be brought back to the city (usually Montreal) and sold at a small profit.

It was only after 1859, when the Brockville & Ontario (B&O) Railway connected Perth and area to Canada's economic hub at Montreal, that Jewish traders began putting down local roots, and in 1861 the description 'Hebrew Merchant' first appeared in area census records. By the early 1860s storekeepers Isaac Goldman, Jacob Goldberg, and Louis Wartelsky were established at Maberly, and joined by Lazarus Cohen<sup>1</sup> in 1869. In the 1870s Isaac Blumberg and Solomon Silverstone opened stores at McDonald's Corners and Elphin. By the 1880s brothers Frank and William Cohen, and Henry Schlomer were in the dry goods business at Lanark Village, while Abraham Cohen was running a general store at Brightside. The town of Perth, however, did not acquire its first resident Jewish merchant until 1881 when Joseph Vineberg (1857-1917) saw opportunity and opened a ready-made clothing store at the corner of Wilson and Peter Streets.

Over the following decades more Jewish names appeared on Perth's downtown store fronts, and by the 1940s Vineberg had been followed by a sufficient number of practicing Jewish families to establish their own synagogue serving Perth and district. In December 1946, seven Jewish businessmen incorporated Agudath Achim Congregation, and the following year purchased the building at 15-17 Harvey Street. On September 30, 1954, the *Perth Courier* reported,



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<sup>1</sup> See *The Cohens of Budwieciai, Maberly & Montreal* at <http://www.perthhs.org/documents/Cohens-Maberly.pdf>

*Twelve Jewish families of Perth made history Tuesday and Wednesday of this week when they observed Rosh Hashana at the newly opened Agudath Achim Synagogue ... Today, the occasion of Yom Kippur, a day of fasting, will be observed in the new synagogue where services will be conducted by Dr. Mann of Toronto.*

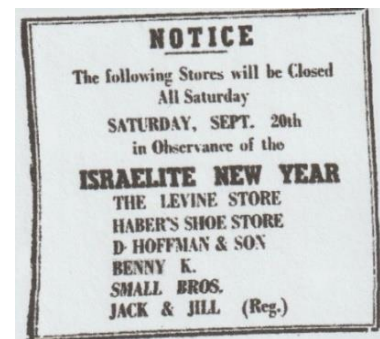


*Agudath Achim Synagogue 15-17 Harvey Street, Perth*

Located on the corner of Harvey and Drummond Streets, the synagogue building had been constructed in 1830 as a home for merchant John Doran (1795-1850) but was converted into the St. George Hotel in 1834. From 1874 it was a residential property again until 1947 when its new owners converted one half for use as a synagogue while the other half remained a residence available for rent. The Synagogue's first directors were Louis Karakowsky, cattle buyer; Abraham Cohen, junk dealer; David Hoffman, Isadore Levine, and Boris Haber, merchants; Joseph Hoffman, clerk, and Harry Handler, egg grader.

In 1947 Agudath Achim was the only synagogue between Ottawa<sup>2</sup> and Kingston<sup>3</sup>. Although it never had its own Rabbi, it served the local Jewish community for over three decades. By the 1970s, however, as big city shopping malls undermined small town main street merchants, Perth's Jewish population dwindled to a number too small to sustain their own house of worship. Agudath Achim Synagogue closed, and the building was sold in 1980.

The number of Jewish merchants active at Perth varied, but in the 1950-1960s there were always six to eight long established businesses jointly advertising the annual closure of their shops for the "Israelite New Year" (Rosh Hashanah). Over the course of more than a century more than a dozen Jewish names were prominent in Perth's commerce; all of them with roots in the Russian Empire's 'Pale of Settlement' - Cohen, Haber, Handler, Hoffman, Karakowsky, Kimmel, Levine, Mendels, Pattenick, Postelnick, Rubenstein, Silverstone, Smolkin, Vineberg.



Prior to the 18th century Russia excluded all Jews from its territory, in accordance with the anti-Semitic precepts of the Russian Orthodox Church. But when the Tsar joined Austria and Prussia in progressively carving up the former Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania between 1772-1795, he acquired a substantial population of Jewish subjects. The new territories, an area that included all of modern day Belarus, Lithuania, and Moldova, much of Ukraine and Poland and parts of Latvia and the western Russian Federation, were therefore designated the 'Pale of Settlement' where Jews were confined to their shtetls (villages) forbidden to move to cities in the Pale or to the Russian interior, and those few already living in Moscow were deported to the Pale settlements.

<sup>2</sup> Adath Jeshurun Congregation, founded in 1892 and now amalgamated with Beth Shalom.

<sup>3</sup> Beth Israel Congregation, founded in 1908.

From 1825 all Jewish males over the age of 12 were conscripted into the Russian army. Then, in 1844, Tsar Nicholas I (1796-1855) amended earlier restrictions to allow high school educated Jews to leave the Pale and classified all Jews into two simple categories - 'useful' and 'non-useful'. With merchants considered 'useful', those decrees drove many Jews away from the land to work in trades and commerce and may explain why Canada's and Perth's early Jewish citizens were disproportionately of the merchant class.



*Ukrainian Pogrom c1885*

The first of the genocidal mob attacks on Jews known as 'pogroms' occurred at Odessa, Ukraine, in 1821, but the 1881 assassination of Tsar Alexander II (1818-1881), even though perpetrated by an Orthodox Christian and a Catholic, set off a round of atrocities against Jews that lasted initially for three years and were then repeated many times over the following two decades. It also prompted a long list of new repressive laws. Jews were banned from inhabiting rural areas even in the Pale of Settlement, and restricted

to only a few occupations, while the Russian media perpetrated a vicious campaign of anti-Semitic propaganda. It was officially stated government policy that, *"One third will die out, one third will leave the country and one third will be completely dissolved in the surrounding population"*.

Between 1881 and the outbreak of the First World War, an estimated 2.5 million Jews left the Russian Empire, while others escaped similar conditions in the Austro-Hungarian and German Empires. Some of those set out for Canada.

As determined by a 1627 decree of Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1542), Foreign Secretary to King Louis XIII (1601-1643), Jews had been forbidden to settle in New France, although Jewish shipping merchants played a critical role in supplying the colony, especially during the Seven Years War (1756-1763). The first Jews who came to Canada after the British conquest of 1759-1760 were from families of Spanish and Portuguese origin who had been living for several generations in the American colonies. In 1768 they founded the first Jewish Congregation and synagogue in Canada at Montreal under the name of 'Shearith Israel' where services were conducted according to Sephardic rites and customs. The first synagogue in Ontario, 'Holy Blossom' at Toronto, established by Ashkenazi Jews, was inaugurated more than a century later, in 1876.

Under the British Regime from 1769 Jews enjoyed all the freedoms of British citizens except full political rights. Nevertheless, Ezekiel Hart (1770-1843), a Jewish merchant at Trois-Rivières, was twice elected to the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada, in 1807 and 1808. However, because he refused to take the required oath of office stating, *"on my faith as a Christian"* and insisted upon taking an oath with his hand on the Old Testament and head covered,

he was barred from taking his seat. In 1831 the oath was finally re-written, and full political rights extended to Jews in the Canadas - 27 years before anywhere else in the British Empire.

Jews were not, however, encouraged by either the colonial or home governments to settle in Canada. In 1831 census results for Upper and Lower Canada listed only 197 Jews in both colonies. By 1850, there were still only 450 Jews living in Canada, mostly at Montreal. The 1871 census counted 1,115 Jews, with 409 in Montreal, 157 in Toronto, and 131 in Hamilton with the rest living in Brantford, Quebec City, St. John, Kingston and London. Remarkably, at a time when there were only 1,115 Jews among a total population of 3,689,000, and almost all living in the major urban areas, at least eight Jewish families were living in the villages of Lanark County.

In response to the pogroms of 1881, an ecumenical relief fund was established in Montreal and a grudging acceptance of some increased Jewish immigration to Canada began to take root. In 1889 about 3,000 Jews landed at Canadian ports. By 1915 there were nearly 100,000 Jews living in Canada and 125,000 by 1921.<sup>4</sup> What those new arrivals found, however, was not the welcome or boundless opportunities of popular Canadian myth.

At the turn of the 20th century, Canadian anti-Semitism was respectable, mainstream, and deeply entrenched at all levels of society, fostering widespread discrimination and mistreatment of Jews. It was expressed openly in Parliament, apparent in the courts, embedded in school curricula, and inherent in most churches. Anti-Semitism thrived across Canada and was propagated by organizations such as the Orange Order, Native Sons of Canada, the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society, and, later, the Social Credit Party.

It was particularly acute in Quebec where, in addition to the lingering belief in the trope of Jews killing Christ, the Catholic Church associated Jews with modernism, liberalism, and a host of other 'dangerous' doctrines. Catholic journals in Quebec, like *La Vérité*, *La Semaine religieuse* and *L'Action sociale*, spread anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the province. In 1905 Henri Bourassa (1868-1952), Quebecois intellectual, nationalist, journalist, and Liberal Party Member of Parliament urged Canada to shut its gates to Jewish immigrants. He railed in the House of Commons about what he called,

*... the fictitious sentiment which some have sought to develop in this country in favour of the Jews ... The Russian peasant has been sucked for centuries by the Jewish usurers ... Hatred against the Jews, not only in Russia but in other countries, does not come from racial or religious feeling but from the fact that the Jew does not assimilate himself to the country in which he is living except to that extent that will enable him to profit by the citizenship of the country in which he is living in order to enrich himself and contribute in the least possible degree to the development of that country.*<sup>5</sup>

In Quebec City in 1910, a speech by anti-Semite demagogue Joseph Plamondon (1862-1928) stirred a student mob to assault Jews in the street and attack the local synagogue, Jewish shops, and other businesses.

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<sup>4</sup> In 2021 there were 335,000 Jews living in Canada.

<sup>5</sup> *The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa*, compiled by David Rome (1988), ISSN 0576-5528. In his later years Henri Bourassa disavowed many of his anti-Semitic statements and actions.



In English speaking Canada, journalist Goldwin Smith (1823-1910), a man described as *"the most vicious anti-Semite in the English-speaking world"*<sup>6</sup>, was widely published and influential in shaping Canadian attitudes toward Jews.

Finding thousands of fellow Jews, each one apparently poorer than the next, competing for the very few opportunities available in an antisemitic city and culture, those new arrivals struck off into the hinterland as soon as they could scrape together or borrow the resources to do so. Those who succeeded in establishing themselves in places like Maberly, Lanark, Elphin, and then the Ottawa Valley towns of Perth, Smiths Falls and Carleton Place, were soon followed by relatives and friends.



Cartoon from the Montreal anti Semitic journal *Le Goglu*, 1932

## Vineberg - 1881-1898

The first Jewish merchant to put down roots in Perth appears to have been Judah Lyon 'Joseph' Vineberg (1857-1917) who established a dry goods store at the corner of Wilson and Peter Streets in 1881.

Vineberg was born in 1857, the son of Elias Elijah Vineberg (1835-1911) and Chaye Sara 'Sarah' Uborg (d.1906). In the 1901 Canada census he gave his place of birth as 'Russian Poland' but also reported his mother tongue as 'German'. This could suggest that the family originated in the Silesia region of Poland but more likely means that his first language was Yiddish.<sup>7</sup>

In Poland, in about 1880, Joseph Vineberg married Rosa Dora (1863-1940), also a 'German' speaking native of Russian Poland. Soon after their marriage they left the Pale of Settlement for Canada, apparently as part of a family group including Joseph's parents, two brothers and two sisters.

The family landed at Montreal, but Joseph and Rosa Vineberg travelled more-or-less directly onward to Perth as, in 1881, the *J. Lyon Vineberg Cash Clothing Store* opened for business at #4 Wilson Street West. The new store dealt in "... ready made clothing in a great variety of the best make, style and quality as I buy and sell for cash. My prices are the lowest in the country ...".<sup>8</sup>

In 1884 Vineberg opened a second store, at #67 Foster Street, under the signboard of *J. L. Vineberg, Clothing and Gents Furnishings* and at Christmas the following year he advertised his wares in rhyme,

<sup>6</sup> Professor Alan Mendelson, McMaster University.

<sup>7</sup> Yiddish and German are closely related. The languages share many root words and grammatical structures, and most speakers of one language can at least understand an individual speaking the other.

<sup>8</sup> *Perth Directory 1884*.

**J. L. Vineberg's**  
**CHEAP CASH**  
**Clothing and Gents' Furnishing**  
**HOUSE**  
**FOSTER STREET, PERTH.**

**J. L. VINEBERG'S**  
 Double-breasted Shirts and Drawers  
 at 25 Cts a pair are the same as all  
 elsewhere for \$1.25.

**J. L. VINEBERG'S**  
 Heavy Working Pants at \$1.50 are  
 better than other stores sell at \$3.50.

**J. L. VINEBERG'S**  
 Hats made and finished houses to avoid  
 any occasion, and this season they are  
 still cheaper and better.

**J. L. VINEBERG**  
 Is getting in new goods daily. No  
 high prices there.

**J. L. VINEBERG**  
 Is doing the latest, clothing and  
 Gents' furnishing trade for fifty miles  
 around. A good reason why.

**J. L. VINEBERG**  
 Have not got the reputation as the  
 cheapest and best store for making  
 time to make and low prices must tell.

**J. L. VINEBERG'S**  
 Men and Boys' clothing fits better  
 wear longer and cost less than any  
 made to order.

**J. L. VINEBERG'S**  
 White Dress Shirts are pure New  
 Yorks and sell.

**J. L. VINEBERG'S**  
 Stocked Shirts, Sweaters, Water-proof  
 Coats, Wind-suits, Turtlenecks,  
 Ties, and Hosiery to the finest in a  
 city's stock.

**J. L. VINEBERG**  
 Keeps a good stock of Towels to  
 select from. Make sure to order and  
 fit guaranteed.

**J. L. VINEBERG**  
 Hints customers to Perth from fifty  
 miles to purchase his bargain.

**J. L. Vineberg,**  
**Cheap Cash Clothing House,**  
**FOSTER-ST., PERTH.**  
 Perth, Sept. 7, 1885.

*Economy In Wealth*

*Gentlemen if you want to economize  
 Just listen to me, I will tell you no lies  
 But go to Vineberg's Cash Clothing Store  
 You will get bargains you never got before.*

*I have suits and overcoats for young and old  
 That will keep you all from taking cold.  
 My goods are well made and sure to fit  
 If you try them, you will not grumble a bit.*

*I have also a splendid assortment of braces  
 All beautifully done up in neat cases  
 Just the thing for a Christmas present  
 They will make your husband's face pleasant.*

*You can buy in my store a flannel shirt  
 Cheaper than in any other store in Perth  
 I can also show you a splendid tie  
 In any style or shade you may wish to buy.*

*Young men if you want to make a smash  
 Come into my store for a tuque and sash  
 I can rig you out from head to toe  
 So that you can defy the wind and snow.*

*I have goods in my store too numerous to mention  
 Come in and you will see it is not mere pretention  
 An assortment of furs you are sure to find  
 Sealskin, lambskin, or any other kind.*

*Before going to see your lady love  
 Secure a pair of Vineberg's warm kid gloves  
 They are of the very best that can be found  
 If you travel for 50 miles around.*

*Ladies and Gentlemen, my advice is  
 Come in and see the very low prices.  
 At J. L. Vineberg's,  
 Foster Street, Perth.<sup>9</sup>*

The *Clothing and Gents Furnishings* venture only lasted two years. In 1886 Vineberg sold that part of his business to Hiram Silverstone. However, he continued to run his *Cash Clothing Store* at Perth for 17 years until he also sold that business to Hiram Silverstone in 1898. From Perth, Vineberg moved to Sherbrooke, Quebec, where he opened another clothing store.

<sup>9</sup> Perth Courier, December 25, 1885.

Joseph and Rosa Vineberg had four children born at Perth and another four after moving to Sherbrooke<sup>10</sup>.

Judah Lyon 'Joseph' Vineberg died at Montreal in 1917. Rosa Dora-Vineberg died at Montreal in 1940.

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## Silverstone - 1886-1935

In 1886, five years after Joseph Vineberg set up shop in Perth, Hiram Silverstone purchased Vineberg's *Clothing & Gents' Furnishings* business at #67 Foster Street.

Silverstone was born in Germany in 1857, one of four children<sup>11</sup> born to Henry Zundel Silverstone (d.c1861) and Hannah Schloman (1831-1911). Hiram's father, who had been born in Russian Poland, died when he was about four years of age, and his mother was re-married to Samuel Wartelsky (1844-1935)<sup>12</sup>, also a native of Poland. Samuel and Hannah, with children Dorah, Hiram, Annie and Hester Silverstone, and Louis and Sarah Wartelsky, arrived in Canada in 1873.

In 1871, and probably from an earlier date, a Solomon Silverstone (1854-1888), likely an older brother or cousin to Hiram, was running a village store at Elphin in partnership with Isaac Mendels (1841-1910) and, at about the same time, had another store at McDonald's Corners in partnership with another Jew named Isaac Blumberg. Those stores seem to have been sold or liquidated around 1875 and by 1880 Solomon Silverstone, now in partnership with his brother-in-law Henry Schloman<sup>13</sup>, had a general store at Maberly. From about 1875 the blended Silverstone-Wartelsky family had been living at Maberly where the census of 1881 enumerated Samuel Wartelsky as a 'merchant' and his stepson Hiram Silverstone as a 'peddler'. Five years later, Hiram established a fixed place of business at Perth by purchasing the Vineberg men's clothing store.

At the same time that Silverstone acquired Joseph Vineberg's retail clothing business, William J. Pink (1843-1922)<sup>14</sup> purchased the building that housed the store at #67 Foster Street. In 1918, however, Silverstone bought the building as well and was in business at that location for nearly half a century. When Silverstone retired in 1935, the building was purchased by another Jewish merchant, Boris 'Benny' Haber (1900-1955), to accommodate his shoe store.

In 1893, at Detroit, Michigan, Hiram Silverstone married Detroit-born Rose Leavitt (b.1871), the daughter of Russian-born parents, Joseph and Kate Leavitt. The Silverstones had only one child, Stella, who was born at Perth in 1895 but died at the age of four months.

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<sup>10</sup> Nellie (1883-1952), Solomon 'Solly' (b.1884), Malca (1887-1956) and Emma (b.1888) were born at Perth. Harry/Harris Lyon (1891-1987), Philip (b.1893), Jennie (b.1895) and Annie (b.1896) were born at Sherbrooke or Montreal. Joseph and Rosa Vineberg also raised a niece, Leah Aronowski (b.1883) who had been born in Poland but whose birth was registered in Lanark County.

<sup>11</sup> Hiram Silverstone's full siblings were Dora Silverstone-Williams (1853-1898), Annie Silverstone-Schloman (1862-1900) and Ester Silverstone (d.1916). In addition, Samuel Silverstone, born in Germany in 1847, was probably a brother.

<sup>12</sup> Hiram Silverstone's half siblings were Louis Wartelsky (b.1866) and Sarah Wartelsky (1871-1935)

<sup>13</sup> Henry Schloman was married to Hiram Silverstone's half-sister Sarah Wartelsky (1871-1935).

<sup>14</sup> William James Pink owned a furniture factory and the Perth Planing Mill and was Mayor of Perth 1887-1888.

The Silverstones were active on the Perth social scene and especially enthusiastic members of the local curling club for four decades.

On April 5, 1935, the Perth *Courier* published an advertisement in which Hiram Silverstone announced that, “*compelled by ill health*” he was retiring from business “*after a period of 45 years*”<sup>15</sup>.

Hiram and Rose Silverstone had sold all of their home and household effects at auction in 1921 and moved into an apartment at the Hotel Perth, and it was at the hotel that Hiram Silverstone died, “*the last member of his family which came to Canada from Poland when he was a young man*”<sup>16</sup>. He was buried in Montreal.

Rose Levitt-Silverstone moved back to her hometown of Detroit shortly after her husband’s death.



## Mendels - 1895-1931

Joseph Harris Mendels was born in Germany<sup>17</sup> in 1863, the son of Isaac and Eva Mendels. Isaac Mendels (1841-1910) had been born in Russia but married Eva after moving to Germany. Isaac and Eva, with son Joseph and his sister Rose/Rosa (b.1866), emigrated to Canada in 1866. Eva Mendels died shortly after their arrival and the 1871 census enumerated ‘widower’ Isaac Mendels, a ‘Hebrew merchant’, with his children Rose (8) and Joseph (5), all born in Germany, living at Elphin in North Sherbrooke Township, Lanark County.

Isaac Mendels, in partnership with Solomon Silverstone (1854-1888), was proprietor of the Elphin village general store.

Isaac was remarried the following year to Sarah Bernstein (b.1859) at Hamilton, Ontario. Sarah Bernstein-Mendels became the mother of five more children, Aaron (b.1874), Bernard (b.1876), Minnie (1878-1878), David (1883-1883) and Hyman (b.1885).

By the late 1870s the Mendels family had moved to Lanark Village where Isaac ran another general store. Eldest son Joseph was educated at the Lanark Public School and in the early 1880s became a partner in his father’s expanding business. Lanark soon had a second ‘Mendels’ store, managed by Joseph. He took over the entire family business at Lanark when his father moved to Montreal in 1886.

<sup>15</sup> Perth *Courier*, April 5, 1935.

<sup>16</sup> Perth *Courier*, April 12, 1935.

<sup>17</sup> When listed in *Who’s Who and Why In Canada, Vol. 6-7 (1915-1916)* Joseph H. Mendels’ birthplace is given as Liverpool, England. All other sources (census etc.), however, say he was born in Germany and, as the *Who’s Who* edition in question was published at the height of WW1, claiming a birth in England rather than Germany may have seemed more politic.



At Montreal Isaac Mendels continued to have a close association with family business interests in Lanark County but also became a leading advocate of Jewish immigration. He served as Vice President of the Baron de Hirsch Institute and played a leading role establishing the Hirsch 'Farm Settlement' in Saskatchewan in 1892.<sup>18</sup>

In 1891, Joseph Mendels married Rebecca Roman (b.1870)<sup>19</sup> at Montreal. Joseph and Rebecca became parents of five children, all born at Perth: Frederic E. (1893-1925), Amy O. (b.1895), Bernice V. (b.1897), Ernest A. (b.1900) and Henry A. (b.1902).

In 1892, advertising for the Mendels store at Lanark, "*located next to the Victoria Hotel*", promoted,

*... boots and shoes for ladies, gentlemen, and children; ready-made suits and overcoats; furs (caps, collars, cuffs, gauntlets, mittens, gloves, coats, jackets); and a tailoring department.*

Over the turn of the 20th century Joseph Mendels expanded the business, opening *J. H. Mendels' Bargain Store* in Perth at #2 Wilson Street East (corner of Wilson and Peter Streets) in 1895, soon followed by another general store at Westport, another at Smiths Falls and a ladies' ready-to-wear store at Kingston opened in 1912.

In 1902 Mendels purchased the Perth grocery business of W. H. Churchill and amalgamated it with his *Bargain Store* at #2 Wilson Street. Three years later, as he advertised "*millinery, gents fine clothing, a boot and shoe department, groceries, crockery, provisions, flour and feed of all kinds*" he moved *Mendels' Bargain Store* across Peter Street to the building at #4 Wilson Street West<sup>20</sup>.

In September 1914 J. H. Mendels announced that he had sold his Wilson Street business to the partnership of his son Frederic E. Mendels and Joseph Rubenstein (b.1885) and the business re-opened in June 1915, advertising itself as '*Rubenstein & Mendels, Successors to J. H. Mendels*'. Although Frederic Mendels was part owner, he appears to have been primarily responsible for managing the Mendels store at Kingston while Rubenstein ran the Perth store.

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<sup>18</sup> The Hirsch Farm Settlement, about 18 miles east of Estevan, was established for Jewish refugees fleeing the pogroms of Eastern Europe. It was the first of several such settlements in Canada to be established by the association and grew into a respectable community. There were three stores, a hotel and a school serving about two hundred residents. Lazarus Cohen (1844-1914), a one-time resident of Maberly, and great grandfather of Canadian poet and musician Leonard Cohen (1934-2016), was Chairman of the Hirsch Institutes' Colonization Committee.

<sup>19</sup> Daughter of Samuel Roman & Fanny Levine. Joseph & Rebecca became the parents of Frederic E. (b.1893), Amy O. (b.1895), Bernice Victoria (b.1897) and Ernest A. (b.1900), all born at Perth.

<sup>20</sup> Where the Perkins building now stands.

**I. MENDLES & CO.,**  
LANARK.

**Large Stock GOODS just**  
**ARRIVED.**

We have just received a Large Stock of Goods purchased at the wonderful Auction Sales after New Year in a Great variety.

**Dry Goods.**

**Dress Goods, Dress Goods, Dress Goods**

Hundred of yards of Dress Goods at 6c. and upwards. Flannel at 10c. and upwards.

|                       |       |                  |
|-----------------------|-------|------------------|
| Table Linen (perfect) | - - - | 20c. and upwards |
| Velvets               | - - - | 20c. and upwards |
| Ginghams              | - - - | 6c. and upwards  |

Dairy Cottonade, Druggets, Tickings, &c.

**Furs.**

|                        |   |        |
|------------------------|---|--------|
| Large Russian Robes at | - | \$5.50 |
| Grey Goat Robes at     | - | \$6.00 |
| Lamb Caps              | - | \$2.00 |

**Men's Raccoon and Siberian lamb Coats**  
**LADIES' ASTRACHAN JACKETS.**

Ladies and Gentlemen now is your time to secure a good Coat at a Small Price.

**BOOTS & SHOES**

Our Stock more complete than ever and cheaper than ever.

**Call and see our Stock. The Prices will suit you.**

**I. MENDLES & CO.**

Lanark, Jan. 16th. 1901. 1321.

The Mendels-Rubenstein partnership was apparently less than successful because just a year later the *Mendels Bargain Store* was re-launched at #53 Foster Street, while, at the same time, *J. Rubenstein & Co.* took over the store at #4 Wilson Street West - in the building that had previously housed the stores of J. L. Vineberg 1881-1902 and Joseph H. Mendels 1902-1914.

The war years proved difficult for the Mendels' businesses. In November 1918 a bankruptcy sale held over several weeks at Perth disposed of all stock from both the Perth and Kingston stores.

Mendels and his sons were, however, soon back in business at the #2 Wilson Street West address. Although Frederic E. Mendels died in 1925, their store operated there until 1927 when they opened *Mendels' Furniture and Dry Goods* at #33 Gore Street East, offering both furniture and ladies, men's, and children's wear, which operated until 1931.

In addition to his retail stores, Joseph H. Mendels was also Vice President of the Canada Chair Company<sup>21</sup>, Vice-President of the Montreal Shirt & Overall Company, Secretary-Treasurer of the Neil Institute Company of Canada<sup>22</sup>, Director of the Winn Shoe Company Ltd. (Perth), a founding Shareholder in

the Perth Bolt and Forging Company, and Manager of the Tay Mica Mining Company, exploiting deposits of apatite, mica, and feldspar in the Townships of Bathurst, North Burgess, South Sherbrooke and South Crosby from about 1905 through 1925.

Joseph Mendels was a noted breeder of driving horses and purebred Holstein cattle on his farm in Elmsley Township, he sat on Perth town council in 1903-1907 and 1910-1914 and was for many years a member of the Perth Board of Trade. He was a member of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (A.F.&A.M.), Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W), and Independent Order of Foresters (I.O.F.). He moved his residence from Perth to Smiths Falls in 1917.

<sup>21</sup> The Canada Chair Company, aka 'Pinks Furniture Factory' was located on Victoria Street. Founded in 1870 by William Pink, the business operated until 1911 when its facilities were leased to a kitchen cupboard manufacturer. The building was demolished in 1935.

<sup>22</sup> The American based Neil Institute was a chain of franchises for the rehabilitation of alcoholics. It promised that its vegetable medicine would cure an alcoholic in three days and provided its 'patients' with a signed contract guaranteeing the cure or a 100% refund. There were eight franchise locations in Canada.

## Karakowsky – 1910-1987

Over more than 75 years and three generations the Karakowsky family were prominent members of Perth's business community.

Their story begins with cousins Louis and Meier Karakowsky who were born at Sebezh, Pskov, Belarus, a small town situated on a narrow strip of land dividing Lakes Sebezhskoye and Orono, about 20 kilometers northeast of the point where the borders of Russia, Latvia and Belarus meet. Louis emigrated to Canada in 1895, followed by Meier in 1907. After spending a short time at Montreal, the Karakowskys moved to Smiths Falls and then to Perth, where they would be known as L.K. and M.K.

### Meier 'M.K.' Karakowsky

Meier Karakowsky, the son of Yoislet Roitke Karakowsky (1817-1879) and his wife Esther (1825-1909) was born in 1865. He became a merchant like his father and, in 1886, at Dagda, Latvia, married Dagda native Zelda Aaron (1862-1948)<sup>23</sup>. Zelda was one of four children born to Todres Aaron (1825-1905), a Hebrew teacher, and his wife Bryna (1825-1908). In the Daugavpils District, Latgale Region of Latvia,<sup>24</sup> Dagda lies about 50 kilometers southwest of the Karakowsky hometown at Sebezh, Belarus. In 1907 Meier Karakowsky emigrated to Canada leaving Zelda and their five children to follow when he had established a new home.

Meier and his cousin Louis both moved to Smiths Falls in 1908 and in 1910 moved on to Perth where Meier opened a business at the south end of Drummond Street selling secondhand furniture and trading in poultry, furs, and cattle hides. The following year he bought John Thornton's brickyard, located on Craig Street, between the Old Burying Ground and Tay River, an enterprise that fired a production record of five kilns of brick that year.

In 1912 his wife Zelda and four of their children, Shmuel (25), Eliyahu 'Eli' Aryeh Louis (16), Rebecca (14) and Fanny (6), arrived from Russia. A third son, 17-year-old Joseph, died at Sebezh a year before their departure.

Meier sold the Drummond Street property in 1917 and moved his store to #159 Gore Street East, at the corner of Brock and Gore, with his residence at #54 Brock Street. In 1919 his youngest son, Eli, joined him in the business under the signboard of *M. K. & Son*. The following year, at Montreal, Eli married Jetta Leah Goldbloom (b.1887), a native of Ekaterinoslav, Ukraine. In 1921 Meier and Eli sold the brickyard to concentrate on the junk and the second-hand trade.

Five years later Eli died at the age of just 30 years, leaving his wife and their young sons, Abraham Morris (3)<sup>25</sup> and Benny (4), to the care of their grandparents Meier and Zelda. Leah Goldbloom-Karakowsky continued to live at Perth until shortly before her death at Kingston in 1971. She was buried in the Kingston Jewish Cemetery.

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<sup>23</sup> Also named in one family history as 'Danuta' Aaron-Karakowsky.

<sup>24</sup> Formerly Dvinsk district, Vitebsk gubernia.

<sup>25</sup> Abraham Morris Karakowsky (1923-2007) married Sheina Palmer (1925-2012) and ran a furniture store at Kingston Ontario for 55 years.

In 1920 Meier Karakowsky purchased the former St. George Hotel at #15-17 Harvey Street as a rental income property. Following his death two decades later, it was purchased by Congregation Agudath Achim to serve as Perth's Synagogue.



During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, before establishment of the synagogue, Meier Karakowsky possessed Perth's only Torah.

Meier's daughter, Rebecca (1898-1995), married David Hoffman (1894-1956) at Ottawa in 1917. David and Leah ran general stores at Ottawa and Metcalfe, Ontario, before moving to Perth in 1927 where son-in-law David replaced son Eli as business partner at the *M. K. & Son* store. In 1928 they built a new two-storey frame building at #131 Gore Street East to house their business.

Meier Karakowsky and David Hoffman were business partners for a decade and a half until Meier retired in 1940. When he died the following year, the *M.K. & Son* store was taken over by his grandson, Benny Karakowsky (1922-2014), at which time David Hoffman left the firm to open his own store a short distance along Gore Street.

After only a brief stay at Perth, Meier and Zelda Karakowsky's eldest son, Shmuel/Samuel (b.1887), moved to Montreal where he became a Rabbi and Shochet (ritual slaughterer), married twice and raised a family of two sons and daughter.<sup>26</sup> In the 1920s he returned to Perth from time to time to conduct high holy day services for the local Jewish community.

Daughter Fanny (b.1906) grew up at Perth and in 1926, at Kingston, married Simon April (1898-1984), a native of Kiev, Ukraine. They emigrated to the United States where her husband was a Rabbi at Miami, Florida.

When Meier Karakowsky retired, he moved to Montreal and died there in 1941. Zelda died at Montreal in 1948. They were buried in Black River Memorial Gardens Cemetery.<sup>27</sup>

### Louis 'L.K.' Karakowsky

Louis Karakowsky was born in 1878, the son of Isaac and Rachel Karakowsky. He emigrated to Canada in 1895 and married Sarah Rashe Rose Mushkatin (1884-1955) at Lachine, Quebec, in 1906. Sarah was also born in Belarus, probably at Sebezh, the daughter of Philip Mushkatin and Fanny Wera/Wena.

<sup>26</sup> Shmuel Karakowsky (b.1887) first married Faige-Leah Koltun, born 1898 at Kiev, Ukraine, emigrated in 1912, died 1961 at Montreal. He later married Rose Unger, born 1897, Felshevishe, Hungary, who had emigrated in 1912. They had three children – Teddy (1916-1944), Bryna (1917-1943) & Bruno (1925-1952).

<sup>27</sup> Where the cemetery records spell the name as 'Karakofsky'.



By 1908, when their first child, Philip (1908-1981), was born, Louis and Sarah Karakowsky were living at Smiths Falls. When their second child, Dennis (b.1909), was born they were living at Perth, where three more children were born, Dora/Doris (1910-1963), Alexander (Alex) (b.1913), and Jenny/Jennell (1916-2005).

In October 1915 Louis and Sarah purchased a house at #16 Wilson Street West where they established their residence and a shoe store. 'L. K.' also traded in 'second-hand hardware' (scrap metal) and in the 1920s advertised in the local newspaper as a buyer of hides, furs, and poultry. However, in most directories and other documentation over the following four decades, his primary occupation was usually described as 'cattle dealer'.



By 1929 Louis was well enough established to purchase the commercial building at #51 Foster Street as an income property, leasing it to G. A. Chong to house the Perth Café (1930-1931) and then, in 1934, to William Smolkin (1910-1992) who married his daughter Jenny the following year. William Smolkin and Jenny Karakowsky-Smolkin operated *Small Brothers Ladies Wear* at 51 Foster Street for 35 years.

In 1946 Louis was one of the seven founding directors of Agudath Achim Congregation Synagogue at Perth.

Louis 'L.K.' Karakowsky died at Kingston in 1955, and his wife Sarah died at Perth in the same year. They are buried in the United Jewish Community Cemetery (Jewish Memorial Gardens), Ottawa, Ontario.

### Benny Karakowsky

Benny Karakowsky (1922-2014), best known as Benny 'K' or sometimes as Benny 'Kaye', was the younger of two sons born to Eliyahu (Eli) Aryeh Karakowsky and Jetta Leah Goldbloom. Born in 1922 at Montreal, when he was just four years of age his father died and his grandparents, Meier and Zelda Karakowsky, played a significant role in his upbringing.

Benny<sup>28</sup> was educated at Perth Public School and Perth Collegiate Institute and in 1941 took over the family business established by this grandfather, Meier Karakowsky, in 1910 and run by the partnership of Meier and his son-in-law David Hoffman from 1927.

In 1953 Benny married Bertha Strelshik (1929-2020) at Montreal's B'nai Jacob (Orthodox) Synagogue and they became the parents of two children: Debby (b.1959)<sup>29</sup> and Len (b.1962)<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> The name 'Benny' was not a diminutive of 'Benjamin'. On the official Government of Quebec birth registration form his name is recorded as 'Benny'.

<sup>29</sup> Married Victor Janowski.

<sup>30</sup> Married Debbie Segal.

At the Gore Street store Benny carried on much of the core business of his grandfather Meier and his uncle Louis. Advertised over the years as *B. & M.K. Bros.*, and then as *Benny K's Surplus Store*, or *Surplus Mart*, or *Discount Mart*, but most commonly known simply as *Benny K's*, the business promised “*everything in surplus*” and reminded shoppers in multiple weekly newspaper advertisements that “*It Pays to Shop at Benny K's*”.

With inventory stacked ceiling-high along narrow aisles, often still in its shipping crate or burlap wrapping, *Benny K's* was a store without pretense, but one where snagging a bargain was guaranteed, and where its owner/manager/clerk/cashier/stock-boy somehow ensured no one ever left empty handed and without a smile on their face. As Perth *Courier* columnist Steve Foster observed in 1986,



*“I always enjoy a visit to Benny’s store. You go in looking for some good work socks and come out with an earful of philosophy, comedy, comment, sports talk and common sense”.*

*Benny K's Surplus Store* was a recycling powerhouse long before the concept was fully appreciated. He bought scrap metal, horsehair, batteries, car radiators, deer hides and muskrat pelts (more than 1,000 annually in the 1950s), used furniture, glass bottles, rags, and wastepaper. When fire destroyed his South Street storage barn in 1960, the fire smoldered in a 25-ton mountain of rags and paper for three days.



For many years army surplus goods were his mainstay. In the mounds of never-used kit and refurbished equipment one found gear from the armies, navies and air forces of Canada, Britain, the United States, Norway, and Korea – bayonets, boots, bunk beds, bugles, canteens, dinghy’s, flight boots, gas cans, gloves, ground sheets, haversacks, horse blankets, knives, machetes, mess-tins, rifles, sleeping bags, underwear, uniforms, and, for a few weeks in 1953, “*army nurse white Lyie (cotton) stockings*”.

In addition, the store offered production over-runs, bankrupt stock, and the dinged-scratched-scuffed-and-dented rejects of more prestigious retailers at knock-down prices – air mattresses, baby cribs, bathtubs, binoculars, blankets, boat anchors, camp axes, coal shovels, cots, duck decoys, elk-hide moccasins, fencing masks, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, fishing rods, hammocks, high-chairs, hunting supplies, lanterns, life preservers, light bulbs, mattresses

(trade-ins welcomed), mosquito netting, oars, outboard motors, paint, pianos, plumbing supplies, portable TVs, radios, raincoats, furniture (new and second-hand), sewing machines, shoes, smelt nets, sinks, snow shoes, tarpaulins, tents, towels, tool boxes, toys, TV antennas, wallpaper, washing machines, and, if an item was not in stock, Benny always knew where he could get it “by the end of the week”.

Over 47 years in business Benny K regularly advertised a limitless “Gigantic Surplusuranza of Bargains” including –

*“500 Kimonos made of flannelette. Slightly used, washed, and sterilized. All colors”.*

*“Army target balloons. Made of durable rubber. Handy as a water ball, volleyball. Blows out to four feet in diameter. Only 59 cents. Fun for all”.*

*“Bagpipes. Give Santa a set of bagpipes, made in Scotland, and he will pipe a merry tune this Christmas”.*

*“Guns – Yes, Piles of Rifles – Just arrived, genuine army rifles, .303 Lee Enfield Mark III; also 30-06 genuine U.S. Army Winchester rifles; .303 jungle carbine \$29.95; Mossberg .22 semi-automatic \$24.95; single .22 calibre rifles \$9.95; .308 custom built M888 rifle \$74.95; Lee Enfield cut-down .303 sportsters \$13.99; old or new guns taken in trade”.<sup>31</sup>*

Benny K’s Surplus Store always offered “Free Pick-up & Delivery in town”.

Benny Karakowsky was, however, much much more than a merchant and businessman. His contribution to Perth and district reached far beyond his emporium of affordable everyday goods and exotic treasures cast off by the Norwegian or Korean Army.



*Benny K's sponsorship board on the outfield fence of the Perth Fair Grounds baseball field. Benny claimed that in two decades he had only paid out twice.*

Sports were Benny’s passion, and youth sports above all. For over 40 years he contributed money, material and his time to the local Minor Hockey Association, boys’ and girls’ minor baseball, the Boy’s Boxing Club, and Stingrays Swim Team. At various times he was Perth Little League Baseball Commissioner, coach of the ‘Perth Tigers’ little league baseball champions and Assistant Coach of the ‘Midget All Stars’ and ‘Perth Juveniles’ hockey teams.

<sup>31</sup> Excerpts from advertising for ‘Benny K’s Surplus Store’ appearing in the Perth *Courier*.

Whatever the sport or the participants' age, Benny was always willing to lend a hand, donating both cash and in-kind to the Mercantile Hockey League, Rural Softball League, Industrial Softball and Fastball Leagues, the Lanark County Ladies Fastball League, Men's & Women's Bowling Leagues, the annual Ladies Broomball Tournament and the Perth United All Stars soccer team. Every year for decades he helped fund prizes for the Glen Tay Block Race and was a merchant sponsor of the Terry Fox Run. He provided trophies for activities ranging from the Western Horse Association and the 4-H Light Horse & Pony Club to the Police Department Bicycle Rodeo and the Lanark & District Fish & Game Club big fish derby. Area snowmobile clubs could always count on Benny for contributions to their race meets or ice fishing contests.

Even dogs had their day. Benny helped fund the prize pot for the annual Junior Dog Derby, the professional 10-mile dog-sled race and provided the trophy for the Perth Fair's 'Mutt Show'. He was also a reliable contributor to the Lanark Animal Welfare Society.



**Benny K's Little League Champion Tigers 1960. Coach Benny Karakowsky, rear left wearing his trademark fedora.**

Benny's generosity and interest in young people extended to the Perth Legion Sea Scouts, the Girl Guides, the Gymnastics Club, the Jaycee Soap Box Derby, and efforts of the Stewart School Sweep Squad's (SSSS) to clean up the streets of Perth. He was a regular contributor to the Civitan Club Senior Citizen Christmas Party and served as Neighborhood Captain for the annual Heart Fund campaign. Winners of the Miss Perth and Miss Eastern Ontario Pageants always went home with a gift from Benny K's, as did each New Year's Baby. Top prize at the Annual Long Lake Sailing Regatta was the Benny K Mug.

For decades 'Benny's Army' was a highlight of the annual Santa Claus Parade. Outfitted in surplus military gear many sizes too large for them, dozens of boys, and a not a few girls, marched, danced and waved under the banner of *Benny K's Surplus Store*.

As a young man Benny was an active sportsman himself, occupying the mound and coaching the Wayside baseball squad, then strapping on the blades to captain the East Ward Rangers against the West Ward Deadbeats at the annual fundraising game on behalf of the Perth Minor Hockey Association.



Benny was a dedicated Montreal Canadiens fan, an often-lonely passion to defend among Perthites of his day, but a love rewarded in 1977 when a minor hockey association fundraiser pitted the 'Perth Selects' against 'Les Anciens Pros', a Montreal Canadiens old-timer squad. Benny defected from his post behind the 'Selects' bench to coach the 'Les Anciens Pros' to an 11-3 victory. In 1982 he coached the Perth Chamber of Commerce 'Broken Wings' to an 11-9 victory over the CJOH-TV 'No Stars' in a benefit game for the Perth Library.

In the 1980s Benny and partner Joe Publow (1923-2012) repeatedly emerged as team champions of the Perth Snooker League.

Benny's encouragement to young people was not exclusive to the ice rink or sporting field, he also sponsored the Benny K Prize in Canadian History for the top Grade-9 student in that subject at Perth Collegiate. On at least one occasion he sponsored a poetry contest for children, the winning prize being a ticket to see magician Ray Mond (1916-2003).

In 1968 Benny Karakowsky was named Perth Citizen of the Year at the Civitan Club's annual awards night.

In addition to physical talent, Benny K. possessed a remarkable tenor voice and was in constant demand as an entertainer. In 1951 he appeared on the stage of the Balderson Theater as part of the 'PCI Glee Club & Old Timers Troupe', playing High Executioner Koko in 'The Mikado', and a few years later took the role of Sir Joseph Porter K.C.B., First Lord of the Admiralty, in a production of 'HMS Pinafore'. He frequently performed as an invited soloist at meetings of local organizations like the Home & School Association, the Canadian Order of Foresters, the IODE, and the Lions Club. On other occasions he performed for the Knights of Columbus and the St. John's Parent Teacher Association and sang 'The Lords Prayer' at a meeting of the Masonic Lodge... interesting venues and repertoire for a Jew.

In 1982 a heart attack forced Benny to step back from many of his favourite causes. When he retired in 1987, he and Bertha moved to Toronto to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Benny K died there in 2014 and was buried in Pardes Shalom Cemetery BAYT, Toronto. Bertha died in 2020 and was buried beside her husband of 61 years.

**BENNY K'S SURPLUS STORE**  
**SPECIAL GIANT CLEARANCE**  
**(All Merchandise Greatly Reduced)**

New genuine U.S. Army ski boots.....\$9.95 pair  
 New surplus H.D. Machinists vises, 3 1/4"-3 1/2".....\$7.99 special

R.C.A.F. Commando Snow Shoes.....\$2.49 pair  
 R.C.A.F. brand new 15 jewel wrist watches.....\$16.98  
 (Govt. cost...\$50.)

 Gen. Army M-51 Parka with lining.....\$9.95 (special deal)  
 B-29, B-9, and Hydro Parkas and cruiser coats greatly reduced.

Brand new, solid leather officers dress oxfords.....\$7.88 pair (comfort guaranteed)

 Men's new buckle or zipper over-shoes.....\$4.95 pair  
 (sturdy wear guaranteed)

New men's wollen work or dress sweaters.....\$2.50 up  
 New men's 2-piece thermal underwear.....\$3.99 suit  
 New 2-piece insulated underwear.....\$12.75 suit  
 Reg. \$16.99

Gigantic reductions on army jeep coats, army and Air Force trousers, dress shirts, foam rubber blankets, sleeping bags, tents (woods), tarpaulins, Selectone and Supaco paints, caps, mitts, toys (kiddie rocket cars, table and chair sets, rockers), 30% off on kitchen sinks bath tubs.

 New 2-piece sturdy foam cushion chesterfields. Get 50% off. Reg. \$295. For only \$145.00. Plus valuable free gift. Latest designs and colours.

Factory reduction special on new extra durable super springfilled mattresses. All sizes. Reg. \$28.89 for only \$17.88

New walnut coffee tables, end tables, davenport, cots, hostess chairs, chrome sets, gossip benches, kiddie furniture, dining and bedroom suites, electric washing machines, priced to clear. Giant reduction bargains.

**It Pays To Shop At Benny K's**  
**BENNY K'S SURPLUS STORE**  
 GORE ST. E. PERTH

Benny K's Surplus Store continued under new owners from 1987 but suffered a devastating fire in 1991 and never reopened.



*Benny K.'s Gore Street store following the fire of 1991.*

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### **Rubenstein – 1915-1925**

In late 1914 Joseph Rubenstein formed a partnership with Frank E. Mendels (1893-1925), son of Joseph Harris Mendels (b.1863), to purchase the *J. H. Mendels Bargain Store* at #4 Wilson Street East and in June 1915 they announced the “*Grand Reopening [of] Rubenstein & Mendels, Successors to J. H. Mendels*”.

Rubenstein had been born in Russia in 1885, emigrated to Canada as a child in 1896 and was naturalized in 1906. He arrived at Perth from Englehart, Nipissing District, where he had been employed as a store clerk.

The partnership with Frank Mendels seems to have been short-lived, however, as in 1915 the *Mendels Bargain Store* re-appeared in its own right at a new location at #53 Foster Street and, at the same time, Rubenstein re-opened the dry goods store at the #4 Wilson Street West location under the name *J. Rubenstein & Co.*

**Great Special Selling of Millinery**  
**AT HALF PRICE**

Still months ahead of us of the wearing of Winter Hats, yet we are beginning to feature Millinery at Half Price. Beautiful Trimmed Hats, made of velvet, black and all colors, charmingly trimmed with ostrich, gours, flowers of velvet or metal fur, etc. Many of the shapes are hand-made and all are fashioned after the most attractive French ideas. These hats are worth up to \$20.00; they're a wonderful bargain, selling this week at

**HALF PRICE**

Offering at most attractive prices our entire stock recently re-inforced with new arrivals of

**LADIES' COATS and DRESSES**

Very sharp reductions mark this offer of

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>COATS</b>                              | A most welcome chance to save is found in this offer of |
| \$12.00 to \$16.00, specially priced..... | <b>DRESSES</b>  |
| \$20.00 Coat, specially priced.....       | \$10.00 Serges, special at.....                         |
| \$36.00 Coat, specially priced.....       | \$12.00 Serges, special at.....                         |
|   | \$15.00 Serges, special at.....                         |

**Attractive Display of Stylish Furs at Moderate Prices**

An accurate following of authoritative designs in the most popular Furs means that you can come here and buy your Furs with the absolute assurance that you are getting the newest styles in dependable quality Furs at the lowest possible price.

Maribou and Red Fox Furs are specially strong this year and our showing includes many beautiful Sets, as well as Muffs and Neck Pieces.

**GROCERY DEPARTMENT**  
**300 CASES OF CANNED GOODS ARRIVED THIS WEEK**

Consisting of the following: Corn, Peas, Tomatoes, Apples, Pumpkins, Beans, Raspberries, Strawberries, Peaches, Pears and many others too numerous to mention.

Grape Fruit, large size, 3 for 25c    Oranges, 25c, 30c and 40c per doz.    Apples, 30c a peck  
 Cranberries, 2 qts. for 25c    Red and Spanish Onions, 6 lbs. for 25c.

**RUBENSTEIN & MENDELS**  
 Highest prices paid for Butter and Eggs.    +    Successors to J. H. Mendels.

**J. RUBENSTEIN & CO**

**\$8.00 to \$10.00**

**Georgette Blouses**

**\$6.95**

15 of these dainty Georgette Crepe Blouses, in a good range of beautiful styles, in colors of taupe, sand, green, Burgundy, brown and grey. The regular prices are \$8.00 to \$10.00, Saturday, **\$6.95**

**Allover Aprons 98c**

150 Allover Work Aprons, made of good quality print in assorted striped patterns, with belt and pocket, Saturday special, **.98** each

**Ribbed Hose 49c**

300 pairs boys or girls ribbed hose in black and brown, a very good spring weight Hose, reg. 75c, Saturday special **.49**

**Millinery Specials**

Some exceptional specials are offered in pattern Hats. An opportunity to purchase classy pattern Hats at specially reduced prices. Come in and see them you will be interested.

**J. Rubenstein & Co.**

The *J. Rubenstein & Co.* store was a part of Perth's retail trade for the next eight years, until April 1923, when its weekly *Perth Courier* advertisement announced a "Going Out of Business Sale", explaining that,

... our landlords refuse to place the building in a reasonable state of repair and have ordered us to vacate the premises. Sale begins Friday Morning, April 27, 10:00 a.m.<sup>32</sup>

The 'Going Out of Business Sale' lasted more than a year and a half, but in December 1924 *J. Rubenstein & Co.* closed its store at Perth and moved the business to Smiths Falls where it re-opened as '*Rubenstein's Ladies Specialty Shop*' in April 1925.

## Levine – 1923-1949

### Shalom Levine

In 1921 Shalom 'Sam' Levine opened *Levine's New Store* at #99 Gore Street East and in 1931 moved the business into a building he had purchased at #58 Foster Street. Later advertising itself as *Levine's Bargain Store* and then simply *Levine's*, the store sold ladies, men's, and children's ready-to-wear apparel for 25 years.

<sup>32</sup> *Perth Courier*, April 27, 1923.



Sam Levine was born in Russia in 1886 and emigrated to Canada in 1906. In 1912 he married Ella Krupp (1891-1964), who had also been born in Russia, the daughter of Laibe Krupp (1853-1932), and had emigrated to Canada with her family 1896.

Before moving to Perth in about 1918, Sam and Ella Krupp had three children born in Montreal: Lillian (b.1913), Anne (1915-1998), and Leslie (1920-1978). Their youngest son Isadore (c1923-2017) was born in Perth.

Sam and Ella Levine's eldest daughter Lillian married Harry Handler (1912-1954), owner of the Perth Egg Grading Station and their son Isadore married Yetta Haber, daughter of Boris and Jennie Haber, proprietors of the Haber Shoe Store.

Sam Levine died in 1946. His wife, Ella, died in 2013.

Isadore Levine

Isadore Levine (c1923-2017), youngest son of Sam and Ella Levine, was born at Perth and attended Perth Public School and the Perth Collegiate. He married Yetta Haber (c1927-2013) the daughter of Perth shoe store owners Boris and Jennie Haber.

When his father died in 1946 Isadore and his mother continued operation of the Levine Clothing Store until 1950.

At 23 years of age, Isadore Levine was the youngest of the founding directors of Agudath Achim Synagogue when it was incorporated in 1946.

Isadore Levine died at Montreal in 2017 and was buried in Montreal's Baron de Hirsch Cemetery.

THE PERTH COURIER

SALE STARTS FRI. DEC. 5th at 9 a.m.

PRICES TUMBLE LEVINE'S \$15,000 Stock of Good Quality MERCHANDISE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC FOR SPOT CASH

MEN! WOMEN! Don't miss this SALE

|  |   |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>SOX</b><br>MEN! Be here Sat. 5:30, Dec. 5th, earlier. Wool Sox at per pair<br>16c                             | <b>SOX</b><br>Men's heavy wool Sox at per pair<br>25c & 29c                           | <b>SOX</b><br>1 lot men's fancy Sox<br>10c & 25c  | <b>SOX</b><br>Here we are with good lumbermen's Sox, pr.<br>69c  | <b>RUBBERS</b><br>Women Heavy Rubber, Saturday or any day at per pair<br>59c | <b>RUBBERS</b><br>1 lot men's Rubbers, Saturday, Dec. 5, at per pair<br>85c |
| <b>UWEAR</b><br>Men's heavy elastic rib wool Shirts and Drawers, at per garment<br>89c<br>Combinations at \$1.39 | <b>UWEAR</b><br>No. 71 natural color Shirts and Drawers and now at per garment<br>69c | <b>UWEAR</b><br>Men's extra quality Stone Island Shirts and Drawers, at each<br>69c<br>Combinations at \$1.28 | <b>UWEAR</b><br>Boy's fleece lined 50% Drawers, at each, in 20's, 24's, 28's, 32's, 36's, 40's, 44's, 48's, 52's, 56's, 60's, 64's, 68's, 72's, 76's, 80's, 84's, 88's, 92's, 96's, 100's, 104's, 108's, 112's, 116's, 120's, 124's, 128's, 132's, 136's, 140's, 144's, 148's, 152's, 156's, 160's, 164's, 168's, 172's, 176's, 180's, 184's, 188's, 192's, 196's, 200's, 204's, 208's, 212's, 216's, 220's, 224's, 228's, 232's, 236's, 240's, 244's, 248's, 252's, 256's, 260's, 264's, 268's, 272's, 276's, 280's, 284's, 288's, 292's, 296's, 300's, 304's, 308's, 312's, 316's, 320's, 324's, 328's, 332's, 336's, 340's, 344's, 348's, 352's, 356's, 360's, 364's, 368's, 372's, 376's, 380's, 384's, 388's, 392's, 396's, 400's, 404's, 408's, 412's, 416's, 420's, 424's, 428's, 432's, 436's, 440's, 444's, 448's, 452's, 456's, 460's, 464's, 468's, 472's, 476's, 480's, 484's, 488's, 492's, 496's, 500's, 504's, 508's, 512's, 516's, 520's, 524's, 528's, 532's, 536's, 540's, 544's, 548's, 552's, 556's, 560's, 564's, 568's, 572's, 576's, 580's, 584's, 588's, 592's, 596's, 600's, 604's, 608's, 612's, 616's, 620's, 624's, 628's, 632's, 636's, 640's, 644's, 648's, 652's, 656's, 660's, 664's, 668's, 672's, 676's, 680's, 684's, 688's, 692's, 696's, 700's, 704's, 708's, 712's, 716's, 720's, 724's, 728's, 732's, 736's, 740's, 744's, 748's, 752's, 756's, 760's, 764's, 768's, 772's, 776's, 780's, 784's, 788's, 792's, 796's, 800's, 804's, 808's, 812's, 816's, 820's, 824's, 828's, 832's, 836's, 840's, 844's, 848's, 852's, 856's, 860's, 864's, 868's, 872's, 876's, 880's, 884's, 888's, 892's, 896's, 900's, 904's, 908's, 912's, 916's, 920's, 924's, 928's, 932's, 936's, 940's, 944's, 948's, 952's, 956's, 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## Cohen – 1924-1989

### Abraham Cohen

Abraham 'Scotty' Cohen (1887-1968) was 13 years of age in 1900 when he arrived in Canada - although whether he reached Canada directly or via the United States is unclear. He was the son of Akibo Cohen and Jenny Yedikn, born at Rovno, Russian Poland, a border town close to the Austrian frontier, and an important railroad center for eastern Volhynia District. At the turn of the 20th century Rovno had a population of about 24,000, nearly 60% of whom were Jews.

Cohen was naturalized in 1913 and a year later, at Windsor, he married Russian-born Rebecca Goueritz (b.1891), the daughter of Abraham Goueritz. They had two daughters born at Windsor, Ontario -- Naomi/Nelly (1916-2014) and Jean (1918-1996) before moving to Montreal and then, in 1922, to Perth. They may have been attracted to Perth because of some connection to a Cohen family<sup>33</sup> who had established themselves as merchants at Lanark Village and Brightside in the 1880s, but a relationship, if any, is unknown.<sup>34</sup>

Abraham took up the junk business at Perth, a field already occupied by Meier and Louis Karakowsky who may not have welcomed the competition. On April 13, 1928, the Perth *Courier* published the following paid notice,

*In the matter of an action pending in the County Court of the County of Lanark, between Abraham Cohen, plaintiff and Louis Karakowsky, defendant. Wherein the plaintiff [Cohen] alleges that the defendant [Karakowsky] did promulgate at various places in the County certain words derogatory to the credit of the said plaintiff [Cohen]. Now I, the said Louis Karakowsky, do say that I did not knowingly publish any words with the intent of causing the said Abraham Cohen any loss in his business and do retract the alleged statements (if made) and do hereby publicly apologize to the said Abraham Cohen. – L. Karakowsky.*

In 1924 Cohen opened a store in the Riverside Block at #97 Gore Street East that would be his business headquarters until 1942. He dealt primarily in used furniture and some dry goods at the store, while continuing to trade in salvage. Somehow, he acquired the nickname 'Scotty'.

Abraham Cohen was a founding director of Agudath Achim Synagogue when it was founded in 1946.

Abraham & Rebecca Cohen lived at #58 Harvey Street and then at #24 Mill Street where Rebecca Cohen died in 1959. Abraham 'Scotty' Cohen died at Lanark Lodge in 1968. They were buried in Baron de Hirsch Cemetery, Montreal.

### Nelly Cohen

Nelly Cohen, eldest daughter of Abraham 'Scotty' and Eva Cohen, was six years of age when she and her family arrived in Perth in 1922. She attended Perth Public School and

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<sup>33</sup> Brothers Abraham, William and Frank Cohen operated 'Cohen's Cash Store' at Lanark from the 1880s until 1932, and another general store at Brightside in the 1880s.

<sup>34</sup> Cohen is a very common Jewish surname, in fact the most common surname in Israel.

graduated from Perth Collegiate in 1932 with a 'Commercial' diploma and high grades in stenography. Shortly she went to work for Boris Haber as a clerk in his shoe store on Foster Street.

Nelly made footwear her business for the next 57 years. She worked for Haber until his death in 1955 and then, in 1960, opened her own shop, 'Nelly's Shoes' at 63 Foster Street. Her store was a mainstay of downtown Perth for three decades, until she retired in 1989.



The only time Nelly pursued other business interests was when she briefly engaged in a trade she would have known well from her childhood. In 1964 she was appointed agent for the Ottawa firm of Cohen & Cohen Ltd. selling salvage from their demolition of Perth Public School. Despite the common surname, Nelly was not related to the company principals, Al and Harold Cohen, although the Cohen brothers were connected to the Hoffman family of Perth<sup>35</sup>.

For many years Nelly Cohen was an executive member of the Perth Retail Merchants Association and was also an active member of the Perth Great War Memorial Hospital Women's Aid Association.

Neither Nelly nor her sister Jennie/Jean<sup>36</sup>, who moved to Miami, Florida, sometime prior to 1953, ever married. Nelly died at Perth in 2014.

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<sup>35</sup> Nellie was not related to the Cohen brothers, but Perth's Hoffman family was. Martha Hoffman (1892-1983), sister of David Hoffman (1892-1956) who established the Hoffman store on Gore Street, married Max Cohen in 1909 and, when David arrived in Canada in 1912, Max Cohen gave him his first job. Max Cohen moved to Ottawa in 1915 and established a butcher shop in the Old Market Building. Then, in 1924, he turned to storekeeping in Metcalfe, Ontario, in partnership with his brother-in-law David Hoffman, but returned to the butcher's trade in Ottawa in 1929. All four of his sons joined him in the meat trade for a time, but in 1960 two of them, Israel (Al) and Harold, founded a used office furniture and building demolition business under the name 'Cohen & Cohen Ltd'. They became widely known as 'Mr. Copper' and 'Mr. Brass' and their company is still in business today (2021), headquartered at 92 Bentley Ave, Nepean.

<sup>36</sup> Jean attended Perth Public School and Perth Collegiate and moved to Miami in 1951. When applying for U.S. citizenship in 1953 she gave her profession as 'auditor' but she seems to have often been associated with the arts and entertainment industry. In 1959 the Perth *Courier* published a photo of Jean posing with stage and screen star, Maurice Chevalier, at Denvil Hotel, Miami Beach. On another occasion the hometown newspaper reported that she had decided to "turn down the position of private secretary to the glamorous Zsa Zsa Gabor". In 1986 Jean became a "regular panelist on the television show 'Face the Facts' viewed on Channel-7 [WWNY Watertown, New York]", a short-lived CBS day-time game show (13 March through 29 September 1961), where panelists tried to guess the outcome of criminal cases as re-enacted using actors as plaintiffs and defendants. She died in Miami in 1996.

## Hoffman – 1928-Present

Like the Karakowsky family, three generations of Hoffmans have been merchants at Perth over a time span of nearly a century.

The family arrived in Canada from the Ukraine in a chain migration between 1909 and 1915. According to a family tree compiled<sup>37</sup> in 1974 they originated in the small town of 'Yashin', (Yasinya<sup>38</sup>) in the present-day Oblast of Zakarpattia, located in the far west of the country near the border with Romania and Hungary. At the turn of the 20th century, the population of Yasinya numbered about 6,500, of whom about 800 were Jews.

Lumber merchant Israel Hoffman was born at Yasinya in 1862 and in 1879 married Sticia Katznelson<sup>39</sup>, who had also been born at Yasinya in 1865. They had one child, Esther Rachel, before Sticia died in 1882. Israel was remarried in about 1885 to Sarah Katznelson, perhaps his sister-in-law<sup>40</sup>, who had been born at Slobodka, Bobruisk, Belarus, in 1860 and they had eight children, all born at Yasinya between 1888 and 1902, before Israel Hoffman died at Yasinya in 1904.

The family's departure from Europe began with son Nice Hoffman (1890-1979)<sup>41</sup> who emigrated to Argentina in 1904. In 1909 Harry Hoffman (1896-1969)<sup>42</sup> followed his example, first sailing to Canada and then, in 1916, moving on to the United States. Philip Hoffman (1888-1967)<sup>43</sup> followed Harry to Canada in 1910 and was followed in turn by Martha (1892-1983)<sup>44</sup> in 1911, David (1894-1956)<sup>45</sup> in 1912 and, in 1913, by Fannie (1900-1993)<sup>46</sup>, Bessie (1900-1975)<sup>47</sup> and Samuel Joseph (1900-1968)<sup>48</sup>, the latter also moving on to the United States in 1926. Their mother joined them in Canada in 1915. The family lived briefly at Montreal before elements moved to Ottawa and Buckingham, Quebec.

When David Hoffman arrived in 1912, he found that his sister Martha had married Buckingham dairy farmer Max Cohen (1880-1960) and secured his first job on his brother-in-law's farm. David married Rebecca Karakowsky (1898-1995), daughter of Meier Karakowsky (1865-1941) of Perth, in 1917, and they operated a grocery store on Clarence Street in Ottawa, for several years. In 1924 they moved to Metcalfe, where David Hoffman, in partnership with his brother-in-law and former employer Max Cohen, established a general store.

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<sup>37</sup> By Inge Cammnitzer-Hoffman (b.1922), wife of Israel (Al) Hoffman (1919-2010)

<sup>38</sup> Over the years, and in various languages, also called Jassinja, Jasinia, Jaszinya, Jasinja, Iasinia, Yasina, Korosmezo and Kereshmeze. In Yiddish, Yasinya was referred to as Lasin.

<sup>39</sup> Also spelled Kathnelson.

<sup>40</sup> In a form of levirate marriage, called 'yibbum' (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), under which the brother of a man who dies without children is permitted and encouraged to marry the widow.

<sup>41</sup> Married twice: In 1917 Rosa Kaplan (1901-1925) and in 1927 Ana Kaplan (b.1905).

<sup>42</sup> Harry Hoffman married Betty Gross (1891-1969).

<sup>43</sup> Philip Hoffman married Esther Smolkin (b.1892), the aunt of William Smolkin (1910-2002) owner of Small Brother's Ladies Wear at Perth.

<sup>44</sup> Martha Hoffman married Max Cohen (1880-1960).

<sup>45</sup> David Hoffman married Rebecca Karakowsky (1898-1995), daughter of Meier Karakowsky of Perth.

<sup>46</sup> Fannie Hoffman married Jacob Baker (1894-1987).

<sup>47</sup> Bessie Hoffman married Nathan Stone (1898-1963).

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Hoffman married Esther Levin (1908-1992).

In 1927, David, Rebecca and their three young sons, Israel (Al) (1919-2019)<sup>49</sup>, Joseph (1923-1968)<sup>50</sup> and Eli (1931-2017)<sup>51</sup> moved from Metcalfe to Perth where David went into partnership with his father-in-law running the *M. K. & Son* store and scrap business. Hoffman and Karakowsky were business partners for 15 years until Meier retired in 1940 and his stake in the business was inherited by his grandson, Benny Karakowsky. In 1942 David Hoffman left the firm to open his own dry goods store a half block west along Gore Street. Through the 1940s-1950s the Hoffman store sold primarily yard-goods, footwear, work clothes, ladies', and children's wear, but, as time passed, began stocking paints, draperies, linoleum, and other home décor supplies.

In 1946 father and son, David and Joseph Hoffman were two of the seven founding directors of Agudath Achim Congregation and its synagogue at #15-17 Harvey Street where David would serve as a director over the entire 34 year life of the institution.

From 1952 the family business was owned and operated by David Hoffman's sons Joseph and Eli. The elder brother, Israel (Al) earned a PhD in Analytical Chemistry and worked at the National Research Council. Their father, David, died at Perth in 1956, and their mother, Rebecca, died at Perth in 1995.

The Hoffman store on Gore Street was expanded in 1970 and 1975 to a total of 5,000 square feet of warehouse and retail space selling primarily interior decorating supplies such as paints, carpets, and wallpaper.

**ANNUAL FALL SALE**

Our large stock of dry goods, yard goods, linoleum, clothing, leather and rubber footwear, ladies' ready-to-wear, coats and variations, small wares, etc. will be sold during the sale at great savings to you.

**Men's good quality, Work Pants** 2.98 and up

**Trousers** Men's Fine Trousers, priced from 4.50 and up

**Shirts** Men's Fine Shirts 1.95

**Fine Sox** Men's, pair — 33c

**Top Rubbers** Men's leather, full grade, 12", special sale price, pair 6.50

**Work Boots** Men's 2.98 and up

**Parkas** Children's, well made in assorted colors, sizes for 2-12, sale price, 6.95

**SALE STARTS** Oct. 28 AND CONTINUES TO Nov. 19

**Cardigans** Ladies' 100% pure wool Cardigan Sweaters, reg. value \$4.95, sale price — 2.98

**Cotton Dresses** Ladies' quality cotton Dresses of beautiful lines, made by well-known manufacturers, 1.98 and up

**Vests & Bloomers** Ladies', of very good value, sale price 49c

**Prints** A colorful array of Prints, rd. 39c, 45c

**Sockeers** Ladies' all wool, reg. 60c, sale price, pr. 49c

**Pillow Cases** Large size and fine quality, sale price, per pair 1.10

**Men's Suits** We have classified our fine selection of Men's Suits in three groups:  
GROUP No. 1 22.25  
GROUP No. 2 31.95  
GROUP No. 3 39.95  
These groups include Suits valued up to \$95.00.

**Silk Stockings** Ladies', of extra good value, sale price, per pair 39c

**Nylon Hose** Ladies', in 48 gauge, sale price, pair 1.25

**Children's Hose** Long ribbed, all sizes, sale price, pr. 39c

**Men's Flannellette, Pyjamas** pair 2.98

**Windbreakers** Boys' Medium regular 4.50, sale price 2.98

**Men's Parkas** A grand selection to choose from, of the very best quality, priced from 11.50 and up

**Wool Sox** Men's heavy wool Sox, pr. 35c and up

**Rubber Footwear** We have a full selection of Rubber Footwear for the entire family, reasonable priced. Ask for our Rubber Footwear catalogue.

**Floorcoverings** We carry a full range of Floorcoverings in two and three yards wide, in Congoleum and DuLuxe qualities, also rugs in all sizes.

With every purchase of 50c, we are offering a FREE try on a Congoleum Gold Seal Bag, 9 x 12, as first prize, and 1 pair Blue Blankets, 70 x 90, as second prize.

**D. HOFFMAN & SON**  
THE STORE WHERE YOUR DOLLAR GOES THE FARTHEST.  
DRY GOODS, LINOLEUM, CLOTHING.  
127 GORE ST., E.

Joseph Hoffman died in 1968 and when his brother Eli died in 2017 the business was carried on by Eli's son, Aaron and his mother, Claire 'Sandra' Meier-Hoffman. When Sandra Hoffman retired Aaron became the most recent in a long line of Jewish merchants to serve the Town of Perth. He currently<sup>52</sup> operates the Hoffman store as the 'Gore Street Antique Market' doing business in the same building that accommodated his grandfather and father from 1942.

<sup>49</sup> Israel Hoffman married Inge Cammnitzer (b.1922).

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Hoffman married Doris Steinberg (1928-2018).

<sup>51</sup> Eli Hoffman married Claire Meier (b.1939).

<sup>52</sup> 2021





*Hoffman's Store c2020*

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## **Postelnick – 1930-1945**

Like so many young Jewish immigrants, preferring not to waste away in an oppressive sweatshop or labor in a factory where work on the Sabbath was mandatory, Joseph Postelnick began his business career as an itinerant peddler, working from a base at Almonte until he moved to Perth in about 1929.

Postelnick was born in 1888 at Beltz, Bessarabia<sup>53</sup>, the son of Hyman Moses Postelnick and Dora Weitsman. Bessarabia was a region in the Russian Pale of Settlement lying between the Dniester and Prut Rivers. Today, about two thirds of Bessarabia lies within modern-day Moldova with the remainder is part of the Ukraine. Beltz is a small city in Sokal Raion of Lviv Oblast (region) of present-day western Ukraine, near the border with Poland.

Postelnick narrowly escaped the upheaval of WW1 when he emigrated to Canada in 1914. He moved from Montreal to Ontario in 1917, but in 1918, at Congregation Shomrim Laboker in Montreal, he was married to Sarah Schleider the daughter of Sam Schleider and Fannie Yiterman, also from Beltz, Bessarabia. Joseph and Sarah were probably living at Almonte when their son, John/Jack, was born in 1920 and daughter, Betty, was born in 1923.

When the Postelnicks moved to Perth, Joseph seems to have continued to work as a peddler or as a store clerk for a time, until he opened his own store at #43 Gore Street East in early 1936. The following year he launched a second store, announcing that,

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<sup>53</sup> Although the 1931 census incorrectly records his place of birth, and that of his wife Sarah, as Romania.



**We are Pleased to Announce  
the OPENING of  
Our New Store  
IN THE d'ARTEL BLOCK**  
Foster Street, opposite the Revere Hotel

Owing to the requirements of the men's and boy's trade, we have decided to conduct this business in a separate store, while our Ladies' Store will be continued in our old stand opposite the Royal Bank.

Our opening will be marked by prices of unusual interest. Every article will bear a visibly reduced price. A few of our specials are listed below.

**FREE** With every \$2.00 Purchase, we will give FREE one pair men's Socks.

**MEN'S FLEECE LINED UNDERWEAR**—Shirts and Drawers; opening special, each ..... 50c  
**MEN'S FLEECE LINED COMBINATIONS** ..... 90c  
**MEN'S BLUE CHAMBRAY WORK SHIRTS** ..... 40c  
**MEN'S PURE WOOL WORK SOCKS**, pair 22c  
**MEN'S WOOLLEN UNDERWEAR 25 to 33 p.c. off**  
**MEN'S HEAVY WOOLLEN SWEATERS** ..... \$1.45  
**MEN'S OVERALLS AND SMOCKS**, black and blue —in the Kitchener brand), each ..... \$1.45  
**MEN'S FINE SHIRTS** in latest shades and patterns; special price ..... 80c  
**MEN'S TIES**—for all occasions. Special ..... 25c  
**MEN'S WORK SOCKS**, pure wool for the Opening Day only—9 to 11 a.m. Pair ..... 10c  
**MEN'S WHITE LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS**, large size. Opening Day Special ..... 5c

**Boys' Wear**  
We are also showing a large assortment of Boys' Wear—Suits, Caps, Underwear, Shirts, Ties, and Golf Sox at a vastly reduced price.

**COME WITH THE CROWD TO  
THE NEW STORE  
J. Postelnick  
FOSTER STREET, PERTH**

Owing to the requirements of the Men's and Boy's trade, we have decided to conduct this business in a separate store, while our ladies store will be continued in our old stand opposite the Royal Bank.<sup>54</sup>

The new store was located at #75 Foster Street, "opposite the Revere Hotel [and] next to Cleanrite Cleaners" selling "Ladies', Children's and Men's Ready to Wear".<sup>55</sup>

The Postelnick store moved again in 1940, but only next door, re-locating to #73 Foster Street.

Four years later, in February 1944, Joseph Postelnick died at the age 55 years. He was buried in United Jewish Community Cemetery (Jewish Memorial Gardens), Ottawa.

His wife, Sarah, and son, Jack, seem to have kept the store in operation for a year or so, but it closed in 1945 shortly after Jack enlisted for service in WW2. Following the war, Sarah and her children Jack<sup>56</sup> and Betty<sup>57</sup> all moved to Montreal.

## Haber – 1932-1955

Boris 'Benny' Haber (1900-1955) moved to Perth from Arnprior in 1932, having purchased the boot and shoe store of Lloyd Kirkland (1895-1950) located at #77 Foster Street. Two years later, when Hiram Silverstone died, he bought Silverstone's clothing store at #67 Foster Street. Following an extensive renovation of that building, including conversion of the second floor into an apartment, the *Perth Courier* commented that the "... new storefront and two new show windows are not surpassed in Perth"<sup>58</sup>. *Haber's Shoe Store* sold boots and shoes at that location for the following 20 years.

Although Haber lived at Perth from about 1932, he continued to operate his shoe store at Arnprior into the 1940s.

Benny Haber married Jenny Kimel (1902-1981)<sup>59</sup> in 1926. They had one daughter, Yetta (c1927-2013), who married Isadore Levine (c1924-2017), son of Shalom 'Sam' and Ella Levine, proprietors of the *S. Levine Bargain Store* at 99 Gore Street East.

<sup>54</sup> *Perth Courier*, May 28, 1937.

<sup>55</sup> *Perth Courier*, September 29, 1939.

<sup>56</sup> Jack Postelnick married Gloria Segal and later changed his name to Jack Post. Montreal voters lists record his profession as 'wholesaler'.

<sup>57</sup> Betty Postelnick married Louis Goldberg, a Montreal jeweler.

<sup>58</sup> *Perth Courier*, September 27, 1935.

<sup>59</sup> Jenny Kimel (spelled with one 'M') was not related to the Perth Egg Grading Company owner William Kimmel (spelled with two 'Ms').

**Haber's Shoe Store News**

Be prepared for the cold winter days. You can buy at Haber's the best Rubber and Overshoe Footwear made in Canada.



**Women's Overshoes**  
Black or brown imported velvet Overshoes, Canadiana make, all sizes, all heels. Velvet **\$2.98**  
Special

**RUBBER GOLOSHES**  
For women, with two dome fastener, easy to put on. Special **\$1.25**



**WOMEN'S CLOTH OVERSHOES**  
All sizes, all heels... Special **\$1.79**

**RUBBER GOLOSHES**  
For misses, sizes 11 to 2, with dome fastener **99c**  
Special



**Men's Gum Rubbers**  
Good ones, sizes 6 to 11! Special **\$1.69**



Demand Kaufman Lifebuoy Rubbers, Canada's best exclusively at Haber's Shoe Store. Considering Quality Haber's Best Shoe and Rubber Values in Perth.

**HABER'S SHOE STORE**

Haber was a director of the 'Ottawa Valley Shoe Club', a business association organized under the auspices of the 'Ottawa Shoe Retailer's Association'.

Nelly Cohen (1916-2014), daughter of scrap dealer Abraham Cohen (1892-1968), worked at *Haber's Shoe Store* from the time she graduated from Perth Collegiate in 1932 until the store closed in the late 1950s. Much of the responsibility for running the business fell to Nelly after Haber's health began to deteriorate in 1946 and then, from 1960 through 1989 Nellie ran her own shoe store at #63 Foster Street.

When Haber died in 1955 his store was taken over by a franchisee of the 'Reward Shoe Company' chain.

When Perth's Agudath Achim Synagogue was established in 1946 Benny Haber was one of the seven founding directors.

Boris 'Benny' Haber died at Perth in 1955 and was buried in Baron de Hirsch Cemetery, Montreal. Jenny Kimel-Haber later remarried a man named Anger and died in 1981.

## Pattenick – 1933-1960

For a decade and a half, *Pattenick Stores*, billing itself as one of "A Chain of Moderate Priced Stores", sold men's and women's clothing at outlets on Gore Street East - at #33 from 1931 through 1940 and then at #26 from 1940 until 1960, and by mail order. Owner Ksiel William Pattenick, however, was never a permanent resident at Perth.

The son of Benjamin Bunim Pichenik/Pattenick (d.1909) and Pescha Goldenberg (1863-1927), William Pattenick was born in 1890 at Brody, Galicia, then a part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire and now located in the western Ukraine. Brody was a center of Jewish trade in the 19th century and considered one of the shtetls. It was overwhelmed by Jewish refugees expelled from Russia after 1881, prompting large scale emigration to the west. Ksiel emigrated to Canada in 1893 with his parents and a brother, Asher Oscar Pattenick (1892-1971).

**January Sale Savings at Pattenick's**

**SPECIAL!**  
**Ladies' Warm Flannelette Gowns.**  
Here's comfort itself, in long sleeve white flannelette Nightgowns, back yoke **Sale Price 59c**  
Each

**New Wash Frocks**  
Of many beautiful patterns in tubfast prints. Never before offered at such low prices. You will have to see them to appreciate **Sale Price 89c**  
the value, sizes 14-50. Each  
All colors.

**A SALE FEATURE!**  
**Ladies' Motor Boots**  
Black and brown velvet, cozy fur trimmed Motor Boots, all sizes. **Special \$2.98**  
Week-end, pair

**Zipper Front Sweat Shirts**  
Colors of wine, blue, grey, green, navy, white. Men and boys alike favor this popular style Sport Shirt. Sizes 30 to 42. **Sale Price 89c**  
Saturday only Each

**IT PAYS TO SHOP AT**  
**W. Pattenick Stores**  
Perth's Most Moderate Priced Store  
Gore Street. PHONE-295. PERTH

Pattenick married Eve Lipson (1900-1976) and fathered three sons: Albert 'Abe' Aharon (1916-2004), Benjamin Harry (b.1921-1978) and Jack (d.2010).

In the mid-1920s he opened a dry goods store at Bowmanville, Ontario, and within a few years replicated that venture several times over, creating a chain of *Pattenick Stores* with multiple outlets in cities and towns across Ontario. The company was later run by his eldest son Abe (b.1909). Although never full-time residents, William and Abe Pattenick, were frequent visitors to Perth from their company headquarters, originally at Cobourg and later at Toronto.

Ksiel William Pattenick died at Toronto in 1951, and Abe Pattenick died at Toronto in 2004.

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## **Smolkin – 1934-1972**

In 1934 William Smolkin (1910-2002) opened *Small Bros. Ladies Wear* in a storefront at #51 Foster Street leased from Louis Karakowsky (1878-1955).

Smolkin's family originated at Mogilev/Mohiliew, in eastern Belarus on the Dnieper River, about 75 kilometers from the Russian border. He was the son of Meier/Max Smolkin (1884-1965) and his wife Chana/Hannah<sup>60</sup>, grandson of Abraham Smolkin (b.c1863) and Ema Levine-Smolkin<sup>61</sup>, and great-grandson of Louis and Esther Smolkin of Mogilev.

Max and Hannah Smolkin emigrated first to the United States, where William (1911-2002) and his brother Sam (1912-2001) were born at Albany, New York. In 1917 they moved to Canada and children Julius (1918-2002) and Edith (1923-2003) were born at Montreal.

In 1921 Max Smolkin's brother, Yankov/John Smolkin (1881-1955), and his son Robert, established a clothing store at Almonte and in time that branch of the family opened additional stores in Arnprior, Smiths Falls and Kemptville.

Max Smolkin also moved up the Ottawa Valley. In the 1930s he was advertising in the *Arnprior Chronicle* offering "*Highest prices paid for hides and raw fur, M. J. Smolkin, John Street, Arnprior*"<sup>62</sup>. Later, he and his sons Julius and Sam established a clothing store at Cornwall while son William did the same at Perth. Initially the stores in both Perth and Cornwall were named *Small Bros. Ladies Wear* indicating that, while William was the principal at Perth, all three brothers were partners in the venture.

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<sup>60</sup> Max Smolkin was married three times, to Chana/Hannah/Annie Wolfe, Celia Bernstein and to Sarah Ancel.

<sup>61</sup> Abraham was married a second time to Eva Lapidus-Smolkin. His children were Ida Smolkin-Finkelstein (b.1885), Anne Smolkin (b.c1885), Esther Smolkin-Hoffman (b.c1893), Charles/Isaac Smolkin (b.1899), Yankov/John Smolkin (1881-1955), Rivel/Rebecca Smolkin-Boro, and Meier/Max Smolkin (1884-1965).

<sup>62</sup> *Arnprior Chronicle* 11 Jan 1934.



In 1935 William Smolkin married Jennel/Jenny Karakowsky (1916-2005), the daughter of his landlord, Louis Karakowsky. The marriage also connected him by marriage to the Hoffman's of Perth as his wife Jenny was a cousin to David Hoffman's wife Rebecca, the daughter of Meier Karakowsky. William Smolkin was also the nephew of Philip Hoffman (1888-1967) and his wife Esther Smolkin (b.1892), who had married at Ottawa in 1916. Esther, born in Belarus, was the daughter of Smolkin's grandparents, Abraham and Ema Levine-Smolkin. Philip Hoffman was the brother of David Hoffman, who established the Hoffman store at Perth in 1942.

William and Jenny Smolkin operated the *Small Bros. Ladies Wear* store on Foster Street for 38 years<sup>63</sup>.

They were the parents of four children.<sup>64</sup> When Agudath Achim Synagogue at Perth closed in 1980, it fell to their eldest son, Robert, to present its Torah to Beit Rayim Synagogue in Richmond Hill, Ontario.

Beyond commerce, the Smolkins played an active part in the Perth community. William was a life-long member of the Rotary Club and a founding committeeman of the local Boy Scouts program. Further afield he worked for Jewish causes including province-wide bond campaigns raising funds for the infant state of Israel.

Jennie Smolkin was an executive member of the Perth Women's Business & Professional Club. For many years, she was also president of the Great War Memorial Hospital Women's Aid Association and active in the Ontario Provincial Hospital Auxiliary Association, serving as its President in 1950-1951.

Both were enthusiastic members of the local bowling, curling and golf clubs.

William Smolkin died at Ottawa in 2002, and his wife Jenny died at Toronto in 2005. They were buried in the Jewish Community Cemetery, Ottawa.



<sup>63</sup> Small Bros. Ladies Wear was sold to Linda & Olaf Ohman in February 1972.

<sup>64</sup> Robert I., Harold, David, and Edith.



## Handler – 1938-1954

Over the years, most of Perth's Jewish merchants engaged in either the salvage and second-hand business or the dry goods and grocery trade (and frequently both at the same time), but Harry Handler pursued a slightly different field of endeavor.

Handler was born in 1912 at Ratne, Volyn (near Kovel), Poland,<sup>65</sup> the son of Nuchem Handler and Malka Bluma Fishberg (d.1957).<sup>66</sup>



In February 1938 Handler opened the *Perth Egg Grading Station*, at #54 North Street, advertising that he would be “paying cash and giving honest reliable service in grading. – Phone-75”.<sup>67</sup> The following year he was joined in the enterprise by business partner William Kimmel (1903-1990).

In 1918 the Ontario Department of Agriculture had mandated the grading of certain agricultural products including eggs. Those authorized to do the grading were not government employees, but individuals working for private trading firms who were trained, licensed, and overseen by government inspectors. Curiously perhaps, the Handler-Kimmel *Perth Egg Grading Station* was the second such business established at Perth. From 1930 the United Farmers of Ontario co-operative had been operating the *U.F.O. Egg Grading Station* in the Butler Block at #82 Peter Street, where Dan J. Hogan was manager. However, from 1938, for the next 17 years, area farmers were served by two competing egg grading and trading enterprises.

Shortly after it opened, the *U.F.O. Egg Grading Station* began buying other farm produce in addition to eggs, including live fowl, maple syrup, potatoes, grain, etc. and selling seed grain, flour, poultry feeds, molasses, plough points, cream separators, etc. In time the U.F.O. station became the local outlet of the United Cooperatives of Ontario.

The Handler-Kimmel *Perth Egg Grading Station* also purchased live fowl and sold feed and a few other poultry related supplies, but did not deal in such a wide range of agricultural goods as did the Co-op.

Harry Handler was conscripted into the Canadian Armed Forces in 1943, but during his two-year absence the business carried on under the direction of his partner William Kimmel.

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<sup>65</sup> Today part of Ukraine.

<sup>66</sup> Harry Handler had two sisters, Ida (d.1978) and Rose (d.1985)

<sup>67</sup> Perth *Courier* February 4, 1938.

In about 1940 Harry Handler married Lillian Levine (1913-1972), daughter of Sam Levine (b.1886) and Elia Krupp (b.1891) who ran the *S. Levine Bargain Store* at 99 Gore Street East from 1921 through 1949. Harry and Lillian Handler became the parents of two daughters, Norene (1942-2004)<sup>68</sup> and Sharon (b.1948), both born at Perth.

Lillian Levine-Handler was also part of Perth's main street. From 1950 through 1955 she owned and operated the '*Jack & Jill*' store selling children's apparel at #71 Foster Street.<sup>69</sup>

Handler was one of the seven founding directors of Agudath Achim Synagogue when it was established in 1946 at #15-17 Harvey Street.

In 1949 Handler bought out his partner William Kimmel and shortly afterward sold the business to James Willard Steinberg (1912-2003)<sup>70</sup> who owned another grading station at Morrisburg. Glen Whittaker, who was not a licensed egg grader, was appointed manager at Perth. Steinberg immediately got into trouble with the provincial inspectors for obscuring some questionable grading by shuffling eggs back-and-forth between Perth and Morrisburg. In August 1955 he was charged, convicted, and fined \$100 plus costs. The incident seems to have undermined the *Perth Egg Grading Station's* trade because it went out of business in May 1957 (while the *U.F.O. Egg Grading Station*, aka *Co-op Farm Supply Store*, carried on).



Harry Handler died at Perth, at age 42, in November 1954 and was buried in Baron de Hirsch Cemetery, Montreal.

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## **Kimmel - 1939-1949**

For a decade in the 1930s and 1940s, William (Velvel or Wolf) Kimmel, in partnership with fellow Jew Harry Handler, owned and operated the Perth Egg Grading Station at #54 North Street.

Kimmel was born in 1903 in the small shtetl of Jezierzany<sup>71</sup> near Borshchiv, Poland, one of six children born to Pesach Shlomo Kimmel (1876-1943) and Yehudit Taube Liebling (1880-1943). In 1903 Jezierzany and Borshchiv were part of the Austrian Empire. In 1914 the area was occupied by Russian forces and then became part of Poland in the post-war settlement of 1919.

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<sup>68</sup> Married Sam Mitnick.

<sup>69</sup> 'Jack & Jill Regd., Clothing for Tots & Teens' was sold to Clayton & Jennie Farrel in March 1956.

<sup>70</sup> Steinberg was not Jewish.

<sup>71</sup> Jezierzany in Polish, aka Ozeriany in various spellings of Ukrainian and in Russian. In the present-day Ternopil Oblast (Ternopil Region) of Ukraine.

William Kimmel's decision to emigrate to Canada in 1930 proved a life-saving choice. In 1939 the Borshchiv region of Poland came under control of the Soviet Union and then fell to Nazi Germany in 1941. In 1943 his parents and three of his five siblings were among nearly 3,000 Jews from the Borshchiv Ghetto who fell victim to the Nazi's 'final solution'.<sup>72</sup>

In Canada Kimmel first settled at Montreal where he married Leah (Lily) Pedovitch (1912-1993) whom he had met on the ship carrying them to Canada. In Poland, Kimmel had worked in his father's egg and grain trading business and in 1932 he moved from Montreal to Smiths Falls where he established his own egg grading station.

William and Lily Kimmel had two children, Abraham/Abie (b.1933), later called Earl, born at Montreal and Miriam (1937-2019), born at Smiths Falls.

The Kimmels moved to Perth in 1939 after William joined Harry Handler in establishing the *Perth Egg Grading Station*. The Kimmels first lived at #13 Market Street (now Rogers Road) and the egg business was installed in a small frame building on North Street, a former feed and flour store. When Handler was drafted into military service in about 1942, Kimmel continued to run their business with the assistance of an employee. The following year the egg station building was badly damaged by fire. Kimmel purchased the North Street property, rebuilt, and in December 1943 opened a new two-storey cement block building with space on the ground floor for a truck bay, the egg grading room, a cooler for egg storage, and space to stock sugar, poultry feed and related supplies. His family moved into an apartment on the second floor.

In 2024, 91-year-old A. Earl Kimmel, son of William and Lily Kimmel, recalled Jewish religious life in Perth during the late 1930s and 1940s.<sup>73</sup>

*There were not enough Jewish families in Perth for a minyan (a quorum of ten men needed for an Orthodox minyan, to enable special prayers to be said). Jewish families living in Perth were at least nominally Orthodox.*

*In the period of 1939 to 1948, for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur only, the community would collectively rent a former theater on Gore Street, that closed when the movies became a form of popular entertainment (long before the Kimmel family moved to Perth), and which had a large hall on the second floor.<sup>74</sup> The Jewish families from four towns--Perth, Smiths Falls, Carleton Place, and Almonte-- would get together (Perth had the most Jewish families) and rent the hall for the three days. The families from the other three towns would stay in Perth for these days, either with other families or in hotels.*

*They would hire a baal tefillah (a person leading the prayers) to conduct the services. The families would provide appropriate attire for him—a white kittel (an overcoat for the services). The Meier Karakowsky family in Perth had its own family Torah scroll that would be used for reading the Bible passages. This, however, was the only time there were communal prayer services in Perth.*

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<sup>72</sup> William Kimmel's sisters, Rachel (1905-1995) and Mina (1911-2002), survived the Shoah in Poland.

<sup>73</sup> As set down by his niece Maria Bloshteyn.

<sup>74</sup> The 'theater' Earl Kimmel recalled was actually the second-floor auditorium of Perth Town Hall.

*When there would be a yohrtzait (an anniversary of a death of a close relative) for men in any of the four towns, arrangements would be made that enough additional men would come from whatever town, so that the mourner would say kaddish (the memorial prayer) at a prayer service held in the home of the mourner. When [my father] William Kimmel was saying kaddish after the war for his family killed by the Nazis in Europe, prayers were held at the Kimmel house.*

When Harry Handler was discharged from the army at the end of WW2, he rejoined Kimmel at the Perth Egg Grading Station and in 1949 Kimmel sold Handler his share of the business and the building it occupied and moved to Montreal.

At the end of the war, William Kimmel discovered that some fragments of his family in Poland had survived the Shoah. In 1948 he sponsored their immigration to Canada and, on-and-off, during the last year and a half William and Lily Kimmel lived in Perth, they shared their home with William's two surviving sisters, Mina Kimmel-Deutsch (1911-2004), Mina's husband, Leon Deutsch (1910-1966), their daughter, Eva Deutsch (b.1939), and Rachel Kimmel-Goldig (1905-1995), Rachel's husband, Baruch Goldig (1908-1968) and their son Fishel 'Philip' Goldig (b.1933).<sup>75</sup>

William Kimmel died at Montreal in 1990 and was buried in Baron de Hirsch Cemetery.

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## **Seaton – 1978-2013**

Jackie Bryan Seaton was not a Perth merchant per se. He was a potter, with a kiln workshop at the hamlet of Harper, but he was also a driving force of the artists' co-op, 'Riverguild Fine Crafts', that has marketed hand crafted products through a gallery at #51 Gore Street East since 1977, and a community activist for 35 years.

Seaton was born in Toronto in 1945, the son of Ben and Ann Seaton. After graduate studies at York University, he lived for a time in Vancouver where he met the Vancouver Clayworks Society with whom he spent what he called his "apprenticeship" at the potter's wheel. In 1975 he moved to Shawville, Quebec, where he operated a small studio and organized a retail craft cooperative. In 1977 he moved to Sharbot Lake, and the following year purchased the former general store at the hamlet of Harper, 12 kilometers northwest of Perth, where he established a studio and kiln and began producing salt glaze kitchen and garden ware pottery. Seaton's was one of only two or three salt-glaze potteries in Ontario.<sup>76</sup>


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<sup>75</sup> Their story of survival is recounted in a book by Mina Kimmel-Deutsch, *Mina's Story: A Doctor's Memoire of the Holocaust* (2012), and in the memoir *The Survival Story of a Six-year-Old Boy* by Fishel Philip Goldig, published in the anthology *At Great Risk: Memoirs of Rescue During the Holocaust* (2021). The Kimmel-Deutsch-Goldig family group were hidden by Ukrainians Mykola (Nikolai) and Yulia (Julia) Kravchuk on their farm. The Kravchuks were subsequently honored as 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority of the state of Israel.

<sup>76</sup> Salt glazed pottery is a craft brought to Canada by early immigrant potters who substituted common salt for the various glaze materials they had used in Europe but were unavailable in Canada.



Seaton soon became a leading member of Riverguild Fine Arts co-op, one of Canada's oldest artists cooperatives.<sup>77</sup> He was also instrumental in establishing the Perth Autumn Studio Tour in 1993 and served as Eastern Ontario Director for the 1,000 member Ontario Potters Association



**JACKIE SEATON**  
*Pottery*

Jackie Seaton is a studio potter who lives and works in Harper Village. His workshop is located in the red brick building which served for almost eighty years as the village's general store. There he produces a wide variety of high-fired porcelain and stoneware pottery - jugs, mugs, teapots, oil lamps, bowls, etc. - all of which are oven and dishwasher safe.

Jackie is a member of two local co-operative craft stores where a large selection of his pottery can always be found:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>HANDCRAFT HOUSE</b><br/>Hillier St.<br/>Lanark<br/>259-2831</p> | <p><b>THE RIVER GUILD</b><br/>57 Gore St. E.<br/>Perth<br/>267-5237</p> |
|---|---|

Beyond practicing his craft and helping to manage Riverguild Fine Arts, Seaton was a board member of the Perth Arts Foundation and the Perth & District Union Library; and a political activist, serving as advance man for NDP leader Ed Broadbent during the 1984 federal election.

In 2002 Seaton brought the 'Empty Bowls' campaign to Perth and Eastern Ontario. Begun by a Michigan, USA, teacher in 1991, the scheme was replicated across the United States, Canada, and a dozen other countries around the world. Described by Seaton as "*art with a heart*", for \$25 donors choose a hand-crafted bowl and, at Perth's annual Festival of the Maples each April, have it filled with soup prepared and donated by local restaurants. In its first two decades the program saw the purchase of 7,500 bowls raise about \$200,000 to help fund the Table Community Food Center, Lanark County Schools Food For Thought Program, Lanark Highlands Food Pantry, Youth Action Kommittee (YAK) and the Guatemala Stove Project.

Seaton's *Globe and Mail* obituary noted "*His life was rich with interests: he played the cello, was a loyal New Yorker reader, an activist and fundraiser, a coffee appreciator, a pun-loving guy...and so much more*".<sup>78</sup>

Jackie Seaton married Joni Seligman at Toronto, and they were the parents of three children, Amie, Aden, Gita.

Seaton died, age 68, in 2013 at his home in Harper. He is memorialized at Perth by a 'Bench for a Mensch' installed outside The Table Community Food Center on Gore Street to which he had dedicated so much time and effort.

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Perth proved a safe haven for its tiny Jewish community, not only from the 19th century Tzarist pogroms in the Pale of Settlement but, in time, from the Nazi perpetrated Shoah (holocaust) of the 1940s -- by which most of their families still in Europe were consumed -- but to what extent was Perth a refuge from the less lethal, but very real, antisemitism endemic in Canadian society of the day?

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<sup>77</sup> Today, over 75 local and Canadian artists are represented in the Riverguild store.

<sup>78</sup> The *Globe and Mail*, October 21 to October 26, 2013.

There is nothing in the surviving record that speaks to the inter-faith and inter-cultural experience of Perth's earliest Jews – the unknown peddlers, followed by the Vinebergs, Silverstones and Mendels – but there are a few first-person accounts of local Jewish life during the 1930s-1980s.

In 1983, Eli Hoffman (1931-2017), descendant of two of Perth's Jewish families, told the local newspaper there had been *"no major incident ... we've had pretty good rapport with people in general"*<sup>79</sup> and that appears to have been largely true. Read closely, however, Hoffman's comment confirms that while relations may have been good *"in general"*, and *"major incidents"* avoided, there were times when Perth's Jews faced the same harassment and discrimination common to the rest of Canada.

A. Earl Kimmel (b.1933), son of William and Lily Kimmel, recalled that overall, he had fond memories of growing up in Perth in the same years as Eli Hoffman, but that there were moments when neighbors and schoolmates made life as a Jew uncomfortable.

On hot summer evenings, when everyone sought the cooler air of their back yards, the family living around the corner from the Kimmels often made it a point to include antisemitic remarks in their conversation, within earshot of the Jews on the other side of the fence. The Easter season could be particularly difficult. One group of schoolboys always gave young Kimmel a three-fingered salute when they passed on the street -- a gesture he was told and subsequently understood to communicate the accusation that Jews had killed Christ.<sup>80</sup>

Life at school included bullying with an antisemitic edge. At Perth Collegiate, when it was time for boys' gym class, Earl frequently found himself pushed into the showers fully dressed in street clothes.

In those years Kimmel still used his given name Abie (for Abraham) but it caused him considerable grief. He recalls a classmate composing doggerel that began *"Abraham and Moses played ring around the roses"* and taunting him by madly shouting the limericks to the amusement of everyone but Abie Kimmel. There was also a teacher who insisted, no matter how many times Kimmel protested, upon calling him Israel<sup>81</sup>, presumably because he was the only Jewish kid in the school at the time *"or possibly because the Nazis called all Jewish males 'Israel', regardless of their actual names"*.<sup>82</sup> His classmates found this uproariously funny. After moving to Montreal, he went to his parents and insisted that as 'Abie' was not really a name, but a nickname, and that he did not want to use his middle name of Israel either, he wanted to adopt the name 'Earl', explaining that all the letters of 'Earl' were contained in the name 'Israel'. It was agreed and thereafter he was known as Earl Kimmel.

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<sup>79</sup> Perth Courier, February 23, 1983.

<sup>80</sup> The three-finger-salute was probably related to the fact that, after a pronouncement by Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) Catholics made the sign of the cross with three fingers, because the signing is done together with the invocation of the Trinity.

<sup>81</sup> His middle name was in fact 'Israel' but as that was never recorded on any school or other documents the teacher had no way of knowing it.

<sup>82</sup> A. Earl Kimmel to the author, January 2025.

The childhood years of Eli Hoffman and Earl Kimmel were an era in Canada when signs reading “No Jews or Dogs Allowed” proliferated and immigration policy as it applied to Jews was stated as “*none is too many*”<sup>83</sup>. In the late 1930s, when it became apparent what was happening in Europe, Perth’s Jews made every effort to rescue their families. Mostly they failed. When William and Lily Kimmel tried to sponsor the immigration of Lily’s parents and a sister’s fiancé they ran into a bureaucratic stone wall. William went to Ottawa and met personally with Director of Immigration Frederick Blair (1874-1959) but was told that Canada already had too many Jews and no more would be admitted under his watch.

However, in circumstances where there were never more than a few dozen Jews living in Perth, a tiny minority within the largely Christian population, Jews could not be seen as presenting any sort of threat. Antisemitism was never more than ‘petty’ and ‘casual’, as compared to the hostility Jews often faced in large cities like Montreal.

Despite the racist behavior of some neighbors, school mates and teachers, Earl Kimmel recalled predominately “*fond memories*” of life in Perth, noting that bigotry between Protestant and Catholic was more apparent than between Christian and Jew. As Eli Hoffman put it, Perth’s Jews did, “*in general*”, enjoy a “*pretty good rapport*”. Joseph Mendels was repeatedly elected to town council and was a long-time member of the Perth Board of Trade. Most local institutions and clubs (social, service and sporting) welcomed, or at least accepted, Jewish members. William Kimmel was even invited to join the Orange Lodge, although he politely declined. The ‘local news’ columns of the Perth *Courier* reported on Jewish activities, holy days, weddings, births, and deaths, just as it did on the lives of its Christian subscribers. Before the Harvey Street Synagogue was established, services for high holy days such as Rosh Hashanah (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Pesach (Passover) and other festivals were held in the auditorium of Perth Town Hall. The citizens of Perth and district shopped in the town’s Jewish stores, and engaged in other business with Jews, without second thought.

Jews were active and important participants in their adopted community -- William Smolkin was a Rotarian; Benny Karakowsky a member of the Lions Club; Eli Hoffman a Civitan Club member; Joseph Rubenstein a founding member of the local Royal Arch Masons<sup>84</sup>; Joseph Mendels and Benny Karakowsky were also masons; the Perth Golf, Curling and Boat Clubs all listed the Silverstones, the Smolkins and others among their membership; Jenny Smolkin was prominent in the Perth Women’s Business & Professional Club; she and Nelly Cohen were active in the Great War Memorial Hospital Women’s Aid Association; all of the Jewish shopkeepers were members of the Perth Retail Merchants Association.

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<sup>83</sup> A quote usually attributed to Charles Frederick Blair (1874-1959), a vicious antisemite and Director of Immigration in the government of Prime Minister William Lyon McKenzie King (1874-1950), although the source may actually have been a member of his staff.

<sup>84</sup> Prince of Wales Chapter No. 133.

Benny Karakowsky's record of generosity and community service, while extraordinary and perhaps more publicly displayed, was in keeping with the Jewish community's tradition of public engagement and philanthropy. The Jewish names of the day always appeared on the lists of those contributing to local projects, charities, and other worthy causes. Curiously perhaps, in 1926 Hiram Silverstone was among donors contributing to the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church construction fund.<sup>85</sup>



This photo of some Jewish residents of Perth and Almonte was taken c1947 at the wedding of Yetta Haber (c1927-2013) & Isadore Levine (c1923-2017). Left to Right – Front Row – Tillie Glickman (b.1904), Mrs. Gray, Jennie Karakowsky-Small/Smolkin (1916-2005), Leah 'Lily' Pedovitch-Kimmel (1912-1993), Lillian Levine-Handler (1913-1972) with daughter Norene 'Nicky' Handler (1942-2004), and George Glickman (1896-1956)<sup>86</sup>. Back Row – William (Bill) Small/Smolkin (1910-2002), Mr. Gray, William Kimmel (1903-1990), Rebecca Karakowsky-Hoffman (1898-1956), David Hoffman (1894-1956) (?) and Harry Handler (1912-1954). Photo courtesy of A. Earl Kimmel.

Perth's Great War Memorial Hospital (GWMH) was the cause of choice for most of the local Jewish community, where contributions in cash and in-kind were regularly credited in annual financial reports to "*the Jewish people of Perth*". When the hospital underwent expansion in 1939, adding the W. K. Danner Memorial Pavilion<sup>87</sup>, the Jewish community provided all of the furnishing and equipment for "*No. 13 Utility room*".

<sup>85</sup> Perth *Courier*, November 5, 1926. Constructed in 1927-1928, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church at 1 Drummond Street West replaced the Presbyterian Church at Drummond and Craig Streets lost to fire in 1923. Silverstone's donation may seem even more remarkable when one considers that from the 1890s into the 1910s its minister, Rev. A. H. Scott, played a leading role on the Presbyterian Church of Canada's missionary committee coordinating and funding "*work among the Jews of Canada and Palestine*".

<sup>86</sup> George Glickman, born in Russia, operated a grocery store at Almonte 1932-1944, died at Montreal.

<sup>87</sup> The major donor, the Danner family, owned and managed H. K. Wampole Co. of Perth 1906-1989.



With perhaps more at stake than most, Perth's Jews were quick to play their part during WW2. The sons of David & Rebecca Hoffman both served in the RCAF. From 1940 to 1945, Pilot Officer Israel (Al) Hoffman flew Wellington bombers on anti submarine patrol with 407 Long Range Patrol Squadron. Joseph Hoffman followed his older brother into the RCAF in 1943 Jack Postelnick, son of Joseph Postelnick and Sarah Schleider enlisted in the Canadian Army. Jean Cohen, daughter of Abraham and Rebecca Cohen joined the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service. On the home front the Perth Jewish Women's War Workers Club raised large sums for the local branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society.

On a foundation of rags, horsehair, scrap metal and wastepaper much was accomplished by these refugees from Eastern Europe who made Perth their home. Remarkably successful careers in commerce were built by many of their descendants, but not all chose lives in business. Shmuel Karakowsky, son of Meier Karakowsky and Zelda Aaron became a Montreal Rabbi and their grandson Len Karakowsky, became a Professor at York University, Toronto. Amy Ollendoff Mendels, daughter of Joseph & Rebecca Mendels, became the first Director of Nursing at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal when it opened in 1934. Joseph Hoffman, son of David & Rebecca Hoffman became a doctor and scientist at the National Research Council of Canada. A. Earl Kimmel became a Quebec notary (solicitor) and the first Jewish president of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada.

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*Ron W. Shaw (2025)*