

2014

2

## **CHAYEI SARAH SHABBAT**

ON CHAYEI SARA SHABBAT, THE PARSHA SPEAKS OF THE BURIAL OF SARAH, ABRAHAM'S WIFE, AND THE ACQUISITION OF BURIAL PROPERTY FOR HER INTERMENT.

AS IT SAYS IN THE TORAH, SARAH LIVED FOR 127 YEARS, DIED IN HEBRON, AND ABRAHAM MOURNED FOR HER. ABRAHAM ASKS THE HITITES TO INTERCEDE FOR HIM WITH EPHRON SON OF ZOHAR, TO **SELL** HIM THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH AS A BURIAL SITE. EPHRON OFFERS TO **GIVE** ABRAHAM THE FIELD AND CAVE WITHIN IT, BUT ABRAHAM INSISTS ON **PAYING** 400 SHEKELS FOR THE BURIAL SITE.

THERE IS A RUSSIAN PROVERB..."YOU LIVE AS LONG AS YOU ARE REMEMBERED."

THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT MOUNTAIN VIEW IS DEFINITELY FULFILLING THIS, AS WHAT STARTED OUT AS A RESTORATION PROJECT HAS LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF PEOPLE AND STORIES LONG FORGOTTEN. IN OCTOBER 2012, SHIRLEY BARNETT INITIATED THE PROJECT AT MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY WITH THE BACKING OF THE SCHARA TZEDECK CEMETERY BOARD. THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT WAS FOURFOLD: RESEARCH AND DOCUMENT THE APPROXIMATELY 450 NAMES OF THOSE INTERRED IN THE CEMETERY; CLEAN, STABILIZE AND RESTORE THE HEADSTONES, REFURBISH THE GROUNDS AND ADD AMENITIES AND EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY WITH WALKING TOURS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING.

MOUNTAIN VIEW JEWISH CEMETERY ON 37<sup>TH</sup> AND FRASER ST.

FOUNDED IN 1892, WAS THE FIRST JEWISH CEMETERY IN VANCOUVER



AND IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING EARLY VANCOUVER JEWISH LIFE. FAMILY NAMES SUCH AS GINTZBURGER, LETVINOFF, FORCIMER, FRANKS, WEAVER AND MANY OTHERS, LEFT AN UNFORGETTABLE MARK ON THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, YET SADLY THEIR STORIES WERE LARGELY UNKNOWN. THEIR DESCENDANTS, IF ANY, WERE NO LONGER JEWISH OR COULD NOT BE FOUND. AS A RESULT OF RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION, MANY STORIES CAME TO LIGHT, AND ARE NOW INCORPORATED INTO THE WALKING TOURS LED BY THE JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THROUGH RESEARCH IT WAS ALSO DISCOVERED THAT 147 BURIALS WERE NOT MARKED AND OF THESE, 80 WERE BABIES. CONSEQUENTLY, A CEREMONY WAS HELD IN OCTOBER 2013, TO RECOGNIZE THESE PEOPLE BY PLACING TEMPORARY MARKERS AT EACH GRAVESITE. THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, WHICH OWNS THE LAND ON WHICH THE JEWISH CEMETERY SITS, KEPT RECORDS OF ALL BURIALS, WHICH IS WHY WE KNOW THE NAME AND LOCATION OF EACH GRAVE.

WITH THE OPENING OF THE CEMETERY IN NEW WESTMINSTER IN 1926, MOUNTAIN VIEW BECAME SECOND CHOICE AND SOMEWHAT FORGOTTEN. AS WAS THE CUSTOM IN THE EARLY 1900s, FAMILY PATRIARCHS WOULD RESERVE A NUMBER OF PLOTS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THEY WERE NEEDED. YEARS PASSED, AND PEOPLE MOVED AWAY, WHICH LEFT A LARGE NUMBER OF

RESERVED UNOCCUPIED PLOTS. GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH INTO LOCATING DESCENDANTS OF THE OWNERS OF THESE RESERVED UNOCCUPIED PLOTS HAS BEEN REWARDING IN SOME CASES, WITH SOME FAMILY MEMBERS DISCOVERING THEY NOW HAVE A HISTORIC CONNECTION TO MOUNTAIN VIEW. IN OTHER CASES, WHERE NO DESCENDANTS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO CLAIM OWNERSHIP, SOME OF THESE PLOTS WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME AVAILABLE FOR USE.

THIS CEMETERY IS BEING REJUVINATED AND WILL ONCE AGAIN BE A **LIVING AND WORKING** CEMETERY. CONSTRUCTION, WHICH BEGAN IN AUGUST, IS A MONTH AWAY FROM COMPLETION, WITH AMENITIES WHICH INCLUDE A "KOHANIM" BENCH OUTSIDE THE GATES OF THE CEMETERY, AS WELL AS 2 BENCHES INSIDE THE GATES;

A REPLICA OF THE ORIGINAL HISTORIC ENTRANCE GATE, GARDEN WALLS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE GATE, A WASHING BASIN AND PEBBLE BASIN, AND PATHWAYS AND CURBING UNCOVERED AND RESTORED REVEALING NAMES LONG BURIED UNDERGROUND. AS THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS WHO DESIGNED THE DRAWINGS FOR THE PROJECT SAID: THIS IS LIKE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG, AS WE UNEARTH



THE MYSTERIES OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED AND DIED IN THE EARLY 1900s.

A STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM KNOWN AS "ADMIRER LIFE" IS BEING INCORPORATED INTO THE WORKINGS OF THE CEMETERY AS WELL. THIS PROGRAM WILL ALLOW VISITORS TO THE CEMETERY ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE BURIED, VIA SMARTPHONE, TABLET OR IPAD.

A JOINT VENTURE WITH KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL HAS SEEN, THIS PAST MAY, GRADE 10 STUDENTS TOUR THE CEMETERY, RESEARCH SOMEONE BURIED THERE, THEN PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS TO THEIR CLASSMATES. THIS FORAY INTO GENEALOGY WILL HAVE THE STUDENTS RESEARCH THEIR OWN FAMILY TREES AS WELL. JOHN OLIVER HIGH SCHOOL HAS ALSO BEEN APPROACHED TO INCORPORATE THIS PROJECT INTO THEIR CURRICULUM.

A NEW INITIATIVE JUST UNDERWAY, IS TO FUND THE PLACING OF 80 PERMANENT SMALL HEADSTONES IN MEMORY OF THE 80 BABIES INTERRED HERE.

FUNDING FOR THIS RESTORATION PROJECT HAS COME FROM COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS, PRIVATE FAMILY FOUNDATIONS AND

INDIVIDUAL DONORS. THE GOAL IS TO FUND THE RESTORATION WORK  
NEEDED NOW, AS WELL AS PROVIDE FOR AN ENDOWMENT FOR  
MAINTENANCE OF THE CEMETERY IN PERPETUITY.