

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Jewish Area at Mountain View Cemetery

5455 Fraser Street, Vancouver BC, Canada, V5W 2Z3



Jewish Section 1910 (Phillip Timms)  
2012



Jewish Section following vandalism July  
2012

**CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1887**

### DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

Mountain View Cemetery located on the west side of Fraser St is situated between 31st Ave and 43rd Ave in Vancouver, Canada. Mountain View Cemetery is Vancouver's only cemetery. The original cemetery grounds between 37th and 33rd Avenue were acquired from the provincial government by the recently incorporated City of Vancouver in November 1886. The first burial took place in February 1887. The cemetery eventually grew to 106 acres of land with approximately 92,000 grave sites and 145,000 interred remains.

The Jewish area at Mountain View was consecrated in 1891 and actively used as a Jewish burial site until 1929. Additional grave sites were made available in 1986. There are 455 graves in the Jewish section at Mountain View. The original Jewish area of the cemetery was formerly enclosed with a decorative iron fencing, gate and hitching post which were removed in 1971.

### HERITAGE VALUE

The Jewish section of Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery has heritage value for its context, history and monuments to prominent citizens.

From the earliest days of its operation parts of the cemetery were set aside for various groups based on religious denomination, ethnicity such as Chinese and Japanese, and community affiliation such as the Masons.

The historical value of the Jewish section at Mountain View, consecrated in 1891, lies in the fact that it is the second oldest Jewish Cemetery in British Columbia after the Jewish Cemetery in Victoria, British Columbia, consecrated in 1860.

Further value lies in its largely intact historic landscape and its collection of historic monuments for notable citizens of Vancouver.

There are many notable citizens of Vancouver buried in the Jewish section in Mountain View including, Israel Rubinowitz, (1882-1923) a 1905 Rhodes Scholar and the first Vancouver-born Jewish Lawyer; Gertrude Weinrobe the recipient of the British Columbia Pioneer Centennial Medal and an Imperial Oil Pioneer; Zebulon Franks (1864-1926), a Gastown merchant and the first religious leader in the community; Louis Gold (1835-1907) Vancouver's first Jewish resident and Gastown merchant who was elected a city councillor in 1914.

Many of the headstones mark historic events, some tragic, in the city. The oldest marker is of white sandstone dated February 13, 1893, marking the grave of 8 year old Nathan Weinrobe who died of Diphtheria. Other markers note the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, and death by 'galloping consumption'. The headstone of Lena Letvinkoff notes she was the 'first BC Jewish girl graduate of McGill'.

The Jewish Cemetery at Mountain View remains true to its 1891 layout amid the manicured lawns of the greater cemetery. It remains a distinct section within the larger cemetery although its original wrought iron gate, fencing and hitching post were removed in 1971 and replaced by hedging that now separates the Jewish area.

#### **CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS**

- All marked and unmarked graves within the boundaries of the Jewish section.

- The headstones and grave markers some with Jewish symbols and Hebrew lettering and some attributable to historic local monument makers.
- The separateness of the Jewish Cemetery formerly enclosed by a decorative wrought iron fence within the greater Mountain View Cemetery.

Written: April, 2013 by Vancouver Heritage Foundation