

David Gelber



David Gelber, son of Kasriel and Sura, was born in Częstochowa into a strictly orthodox family. He was brought up in a religious and nationalistic spirit, which has left a spiritual imprint on his life.

The First World War (1914-1918) was accompanied by a general impoverishment of the Jewish masses everywhere and, particularly, in Częstochowa. Hunger and want reigned supreme in the Jewish houses and, obviously, in the home of the Gelbers also.

David Gelber strove to tear himself away from these surroundings of dearth and need and to go out into the wide world, [but] he was still too young then.

As soon as he reached the age of seventeen, he left Częstochowa for Austria, to the city of Vienna. Despite the fact that the city of Vienna strongly impressed him and formed his physical and spiritual life, he did not think to remain there. He aspired to travel, as a pioneer, to [the Land of¹] Israel or to his brother Nathan in Canada.

Due to the fact that he received a permit [i.e., a visa] from his brother in Canada, after spending three years in Vienna, he left Austria and, in February 1926, he arrived in Quebec. Straight away, he settled down materially and learned English and French. At the same time, he was socially active in the Jewish communal institutions and held the office of Treasurer of the Talmud Torah².

Five years later, he was granted Canadian citizenship. He met Miss Sadie Evan, the daughter of George and Jessica Evan, and they were wed. They have three children - two sons and a daughter. After the eldest son, Nachum, became *bar-mitzvah*, the whole family moved to Montreal. All three children have received a general [viz. secular] Yiddish-Hebrew upbringing, as well as a university education and they are all professionals.

David Gelber is one of the founders of the Czenstochover and Vicinity Aid Society of Montreal, having held the office of Treasurer. To this very day, he is active with advice, action and finances. He is also active in an entire array of Jewish national and cultural institutions.

Mrs Sadie Gelber is well-known in Jewish circles and plays a respected role in communal life.

¹ [TN: At the period this account is set – the years following the First World War – the modern-day State of Israel had not yet been established, and thus would have been referred to as “Palestine” throughout the globe or “Eretz Yisroel” (Land of Israel) among Jews.]

² [TN: Large-scale public cheder (religious primary school).]