



# Remembering First “Twins” Bar Mitzvah

By Harold Rodnunsky

Peter Rodnunsky immigrated to Canada in 1910 from Mirgorod, Ukraine, Russia to Winnipeg, Canada. The following year, Peter sent for Mania Hardashnikov, from the town of Sorochina Poltova, Gebernia, Ukraine Russia. Mania, along with cousins Kalman and Hodel Hardin, parents of Susky, Sarah, Isadore and Tom, who came via Wales, British Isles, arrived in Winnipeg during March 1911. Peter and Mania were married in Winnipeg and traveled to Edmonton to join the other three family members who were already living in Edmonton since 1906 including Hyman and Sonia Satanove, Max and Malka Rodnunsky and Sam and Ann Rodnunsky. Sonia, Malka and Sam were Peter’s siblings. Peter and Mania had four children: Esther in 1913, Hymie in 1917 and two twin boys; Harold and Albert in 1926.

On arriving in Edmonton, in 1911, Peter and Mania opened a small grocery store and snack business on the west side of 101 Street and 103 Avenue. They attended the Congregation Beth Israel. Peter was a charter member of the Chevra Kadisha along with Max and Sam Rodnunsky. Mania looked after the Women’s Wing of the Chevra Kadisha.

In 1916, Peter and Mania moved to Kingman, Alberta (60 miles south-east of Edmonton between Tofield and Camrose) where Peter built his general store known as Kingman’s Farmers Supply.

In 1931, when the twin boys, Harold and Albert, were five years old, the Rodnunskys moved back to Edmonton locating at 107 Avenue and 95 St. The twins were enrolled in a Jewish school located at 103 Avenue and 95 St. and they regularly attended Synagogue.

Rabbi Haft’s cousin, Mr. Levine, who lived just down 107 Avenue prepared the twins for their Bar Mitzvah which was held at the Beth Israel on Saturday, August 13, 1939. Harold presented the introductory blessing, then he said the Haftorah, whereupon Albert repeated the same Haftorah. Albert then completed the last seven prayers.

The Kiddish that followed was held outside in front of the Synagogue with a large table in the form of a “U” shape with the Rabbi and Rebbitzen and a visitor from the Roman Catholic Parish of Legal, Father Tessier (who later became Monsignor Tessier) at the head table with Peter and Mania and the twins. There were approximately 50 guests at the table. Kosher delights were prepared by Mania Rodnunsky with the table served by Mania’s sisters and sister-in-laws: Aunt Rose Simmons, Aunt Freda Slutsky, Aunt Rae Sorokin, Aunt Marie Hardin, Aunt Rita Hardin and Aunt Fanny Hardin. The menu included gefilte fish with hard boiled eggs, followed by blintzes, vartuten, sour cream, salad and pickles and buns. Dessert was kichel, bagel and sponge cake, tea and milk.

Harold and Albert continue their shul observance. In 1945 Albert enrolled at the University of Toronto and Harold, in 1956 began teaching for the Westlock School Division at Jarvie, Alberta.