

## A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

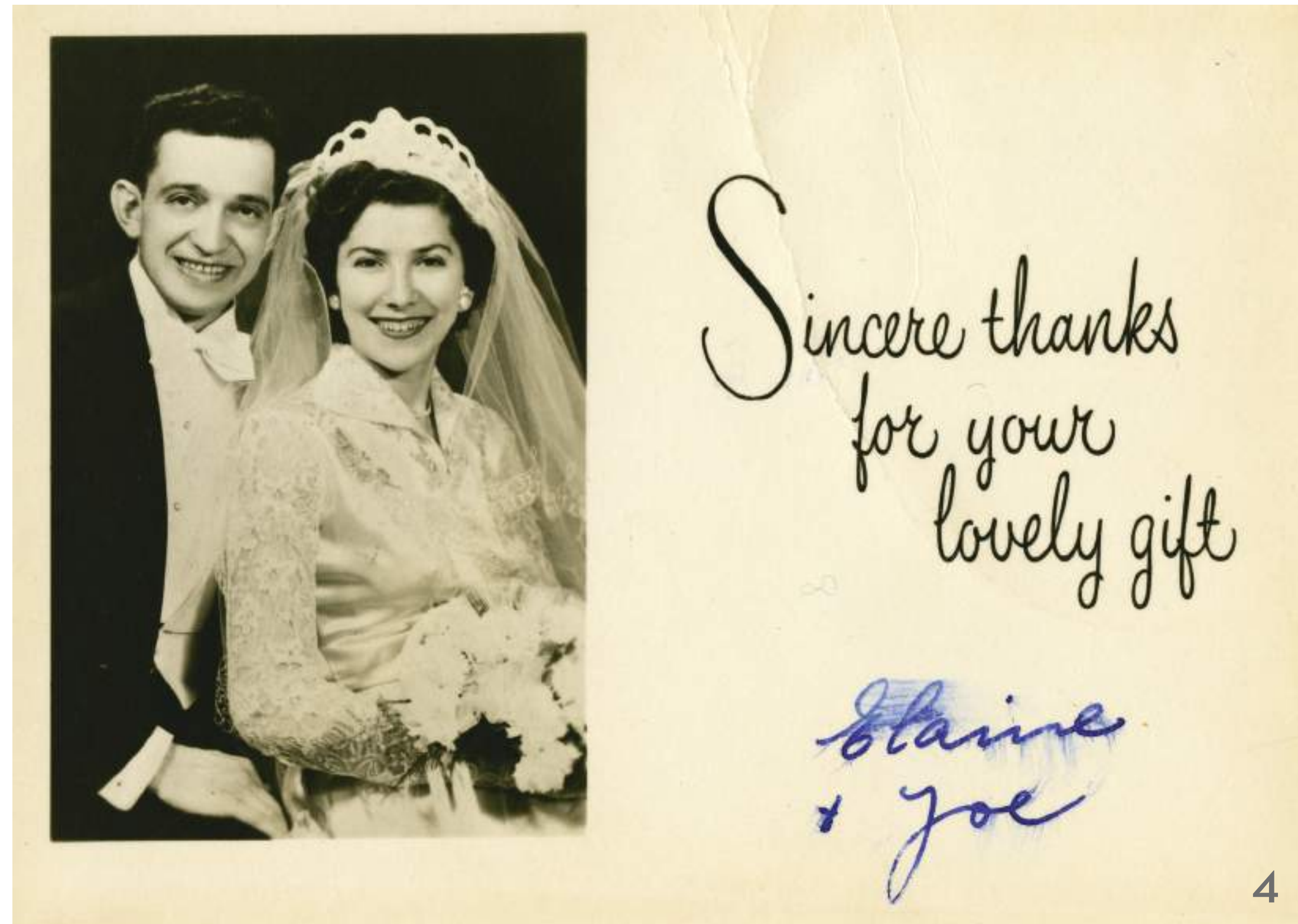
The couple stealing a kiss on this Toronto park bench is Dr. William Harris (b. 1895) and his new bride Tillie Shayne (b. 1896). The photo, reminiscent of Robert Doisneau's iconic 1950 Parisian photo *The Kiss by the Hotel de Ville*, depicts romantic young love. In 1914, Harris inscribed a message on his University of Toronto graduation photo addressed to his "sweetheart" with a prophetic promise "May the next picture I take in my life be

with her as my wife." William and Tillie were married in Montreal on February 24, 1918. The Yiddish term *bashert*, which means a person's predestined romantic partner or soulmate, seems apt for this picture. In other words, they were "made" for each other.

1. William Harris and Tillie Shayne, likely High Park, Toronto, ca. 1918.
2. William Harris and Tillie Shayne, 1917.
3. Reverse of William Harris' graduation photo addressed to Tillie, 25 Nov. 1914.

Harris and Shayne Families Collection. OJA, 1986-7-6.





# LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Michael Turk made a *shidduch* (match) that resulted in the marriage of his younger sister Ida to his friend Berel Blum. When Mike pointed out his younger sister to Berel at a Saturday night dance at the Brunswick Street Talmud Torah, Berel promptly feigned illness and escorted his date home. He then quickly returned to be with Ida. “It was love at first sight.” They were engaged two months later, and were married the same year at the D’arcy Street Talmud Torah on November 16, 1952.

Matchmakers often aid in finding your *bashert*. They can take the form of relatives, friends and even hired professionals. Additionally, Jewish community members have relied on dating services, including love ads in the classifieds, services such as Jewish Family & Child’s Jewish Dateline (1980-1995) which offered “a discreet way to meet Jewish singles who would like to meet you,” and, of course, the present-day J-Date and J-Swipe.

1. Studio engagement portrait of Berel Blum and Ida Turk, Toronto, April 1952. Photograph by Dale Studio.
2. Studio portrait of the bride, Ida Turk, Toronto, 16 Nov. 1952. Photograph by Dale Studio.
3. Y.M.-Y.W.H.A. teen dance at Brunswick Avenue Talmud Torah, ca. 1950. OJA, fonds 61, series 6, item 18.
4. Thank you card from newlyweds Elaine and Joe, Toronto, ca. 1953. Ida diligently saved from her weekly salary of \$36.00 per week for her wedding gown (\$100) and proudly loaned her dress to many friends including Elaine whom she met on the factory room floor at Tip Top Tailors, her first employer in Toronto after immigrating to Canada in 1948. Blum and Turk Families Collection. OJA, 2018-5-14.





## SHARED VALUES

Born in Toronto, Rina Smith was raised in the apartment above her parents' grocery shop at the corner of Ulster Street and Brunswick Avenue. In 1950, Rina, an active youth member of the Zionist group Hashomer Hazair, was attending a program at Christie Pitts. "They prepped us before the event to keep an eye out for a new member joining our group, a recent immigrant from Hungary. I took one look at George seated on the park bench, introduced myself, and we have been together ever since." Rina reflected that the foundation of their relationship was their commitment to Israel and making *aliyah* (immigrating to Israel).

Rina and George were married on March 11, 1951 at the home of Rabbi A. Bernstein at 516 Palmerston Boulevard followed by a small reception at her parents' home. George and Rina moved to Israel in the summer of 1951 but returned to Canada in 1956 with their daughter Yonah, largely due to Rina's disillusionment with kibbutz life.

1 Newlyweds Rina and George Fleischmann pose for an official portrait, Israel, 1953.

2 George Fleischmann, Kibbutz Gal On, Negev, Israel, ca. 1952.

3 Rina Fleischmann, Kibbutz Gal On, Negev, Israel, ca. 1952.

4 George Fleischmann on tractor, Kibbutz Gal On, Negev, Israel, ca. 1952.

Smith and Fleischmann Families Collection. OJA, 2018-6-4.





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# CHABAD LUBAVITCH TRADITIONS

On December 12, 2012, New York-born and raised Lea New married Torontonion Avi Minkowitz at the iconic 667 Eastern Parkway—headquarters of the Chabad movement—in Brooklyn, New York. Their wedding began with *kabbalat panim*, two separate welcoming receptions, one for the bride and one for the groom. In the Orthodox tradition, there are meaningful dress customs for grooms as well—a *kittul* (the white shirt representing the purity of angels) bound by a *gartle*, (belt) to separate the upper and lower halves of the (body) and a *kapota*, (overcoat). For this wedding, these garments had belonged to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and were thus very meaningful.

Like many Orthodox couples, Lea and Avi's *chuppah* (wedding ceremony) was under the sky, symbolizing God's blessing to Abraham that his children shall be "as numerous as the stars." During the wedding ceremony, the groom's buttons and shoelaces were undone, symbolizing the idea that on the groom's wedding day, he is boundless.

1. *Kabbalat panim* ceremony of Lea New Minkowitz (seated centre), her mother Dvora New (left) and mother-in-law Lee Minkowitz (right). Others include grandparents Shoshana Drizin, Sabina Rosenbloom, Faye Minkowitz and Chana New along with the bride and groom's sisters' Mali Labkowski, Adina Minkowitz Silberman and Sheera Minkowitz.
2. Lea New Minkowitz is escorted to the outdoor *chuppah* by her mother Dvora New (left) and mother-in-law Lee Rosenbloom (right), Brooklyn.
3. Guests assembled for the *chuppah* spilling onto the street.
4. Avi Minkowitz is assisted with his *kapota* (overcoat) by his father Joseph Minkowitz.

New and Minkowitz Families Collection. OJA, 2018-6-13.





# HENNA NIGHT

Traditionally celebrated on the eve before the wedding day, *Noche de Novia* (Night of the Bride) is a Sephardic Moroccan ceremony in which the bride dresses in an elaborate gown and head dress. For Esther Osiel, this was the most meaningful part of her wedding. Wearing a gown worn by three consecutive generations of women, including Esther's mother, maternal grandmother and dozens of relatives demonstrates the central role that tradition plays in Jewish weddings and how culture is passed down from one generation to the next.

Esther and Errol Singer were married on July 24, 1994. Honoured to continue the Moroccan tradition, Esther was dressed by her mother Mercedes in the elaborately decorated velvet gown known as *Vestido de Berberisca*, a belt (*golel*), headpiece (*jemar*), jewellery and more. The bride receives a special prayer and simple circular henna marking on her hand as she is presented to the community. Well-wishers bid her and the groom good luck.

1. Bride to be Esther Osiel, *Noche de Novia*, Toronto, July 1994.
2. Engagement portrait of Esther's maternal grandparents Moses Benhaim and Esther Soberano (age 14), Tangier, Morocco, 1923.
3. *Noche de Novia* for Esther's Uncle Albert Benhaim and Aunt Luna Serfaty. Seated front row left is Esther's mother Mercedes Behaim, Tangier, Morocco, ca. 1949.
4. *Noche de Novia* for Esther's mother Mercedes Benhaim (centre) and Mercedes' sister-in-laws to be Esther Osiel (left) and Perla Osiel (right), Toronto, Dec. 1960.

Osiel Family Collection. OJA, 2018-6-12.





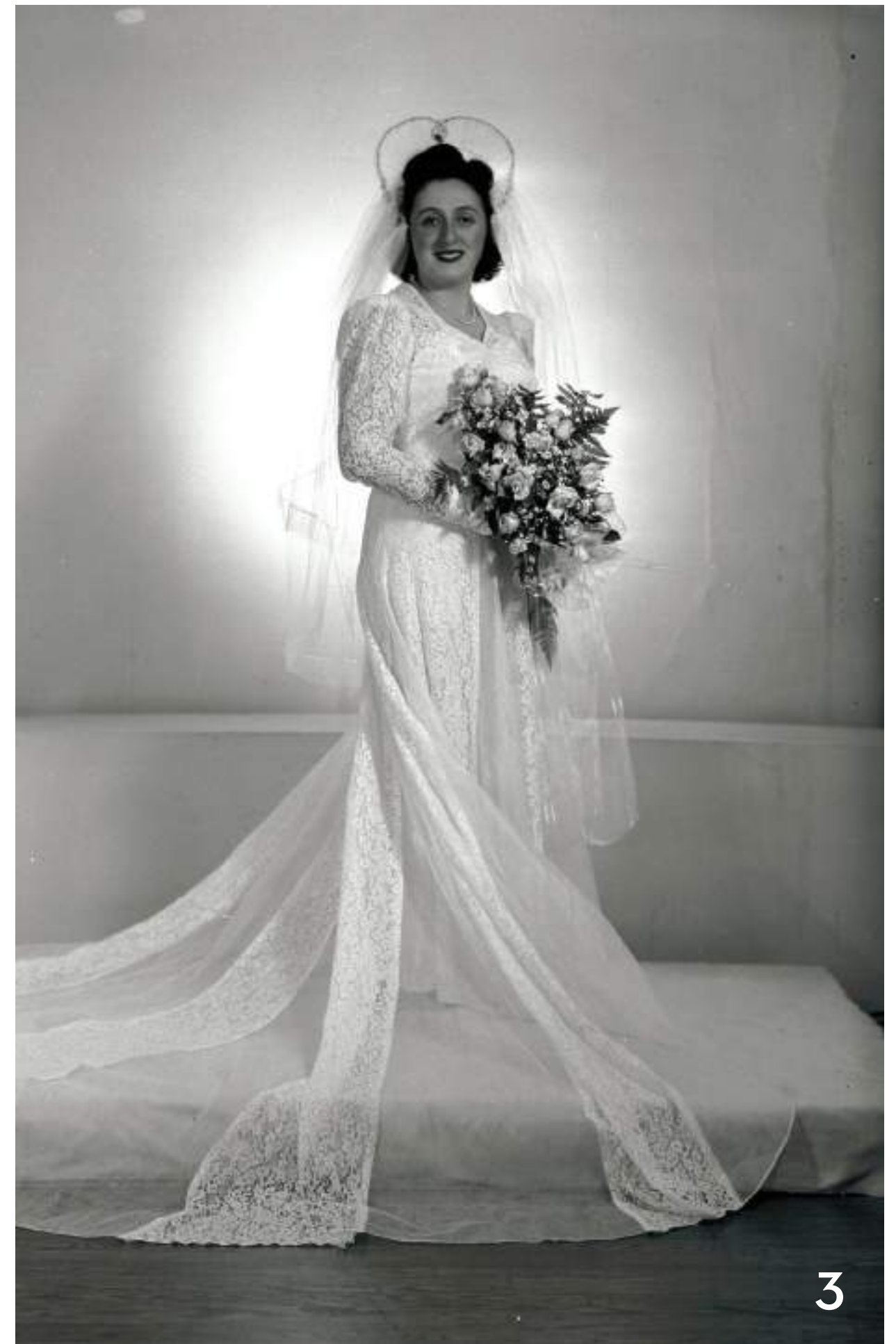
# STUDIO WEDDING PORTRAITURE

Wedding photography is prominent throughout the Ontario Jewish Archives' collection documenting the social history of the Jewish community, including shifts in tradition, custom, geography, and, of course, fashion! The variety of bridal portraits is also quite remarkable. In these three studio photographs from the late 19th and early 20th century, the formality is quite evident in the way the couples pose, their stoic facial expressions and dress. In the early days of photography, studio wedding portraits were standard because the photography equipment was too heavy to bring to the wedding venue; however, this type of portraiture remained in fashion long after.

When discussing his father's early photography business from this same period, photographer Al Gilbert recalled the challenge of Canada's blue laws, "My father did Jewish weddings, which were on Sundays so a policeman would stand outside and every time he opened the door there was a fine of \$2.50".

1. Mary Rosen and Joseph Alexandroff, wedding portrait, Toronto, 1 Sept. 1930. OJA, item 4766.
2. Wedding portrait of Anna Nathanson and Isidore Goldstick, 1917. Photograph by Farmer Brothers Studio. OJA, fonds 45, item 35.
3. Studio portrait of Miriam Jacoby and Moishe Oelbaum, New York, ca. 1895. Photograph by Paley's. OJA, fonds 24, file 5, item 9.





# SYLVIA SCHWARTZ'S BRIDES

Prominent Toronto portrait photographer Sylvia Schwartz (1914-1998) began her career during the 1940s. From her studio on Grenville Street, she captured images of families and servicemen during the war, as well as brides. She eventually carved out a niche for herself mid-career, specializing in child portraiture, but upon viewing these bridal portraits, one might wonder why. Schwartz's dramatically lit studio portraits have a serene quality, marking a shift in wedding portraiture from formality to artistry. At times, the brides are positioned in similar poses, gazing off into the distance. The overall effect is

strikingly reminiscent of the promotional still photos used by Hollywood film studios of the era. The quality of these photographs speaks to the value the community placed on investing in wedding portraiture, and possibly the family's affluence.

1. Portrait of Betty Rochelle Weiss, Feb. 1943. OJA, fonds 80, series 7, item 25.
  2. Likely portrait of Ellen "Honey" Dworkin, Jul. 1943. OJA, fonds 80, series 7, item 11.
  3. Portrait of Ruth Freeman, 27 June 1942. OJA, fonds 80, series 7, item 13.
  4. Portrait of Myra Rotenberg, 4 Mar. 1945. OJA, fonds 80, series 7, item 21.
  5. Portrait of Adele Rotenberg, Sep. 1943. OJA, fonds 80, series 7, item 20.
- From the Sylvia Schwartz Collection





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# FAMILY & WEDDING PARTY PORTRAITS

Large group portraits that feature family and friends flanking the couple are an important part of the wedding day and often take place after the *bedeken* ceremony. From these group photographs, we can learn a lot about the family depicted. The backgrounds in these photographs, for example, often provide clues—the pattern of the flooring, the structure of staircases, the texture of the walls—that indicate the wedding venue: Is that Beth Tzedec or Temple Sinai? The wedding venue, in turn, gives us a better understanding of the family, their synagogue affiliation, and perhaps their neighbourhood (if they

married at home). The family portrait featuring multiple generations is a reminder of the importance of passing down tradition and values, from generation to generation—*m'dor l'dor*—especially at this important Jewish lifecycle event.

1. Wedding party portrait at the marriage of Anna (née Shaw) to David Lang (standing third left), Beth Medrosh Hagodel Chevra Thillum (McCaul Street Synagogue), Toronto, 16 Jun. 1946. OJA, 2015-4-7.
2. Family portrait of bride and groom Roslyn (née Tepperman) and Howard English with grandparents (from left to right) Jenny English, Yida Chapnick, Yetta Chapnick, Miril Kirshbaum and Joseph Kirshbaum, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, Toronto, 20 Aug. 1970. Photograph by Morrison Studios. OJA, 2018-6-11
3. Mehr family portrait at the wedding of Ethel Mehr to Henry Greisman, Toronto, 15 Dec. 1926. Pictured from left to right are Ethel's siblings Pincus, Lucille, Leonard, Bessie (mother), Ethel (the bride), Mendel (father) and Bernice Mehr, Lyndhurst Avenue, Toronto. OJA, fonds 68, item 47.
4. Mont wedding party, Kirkland Lake, ca. 1938. Photograph by Duke Studio. OJA, item 849.



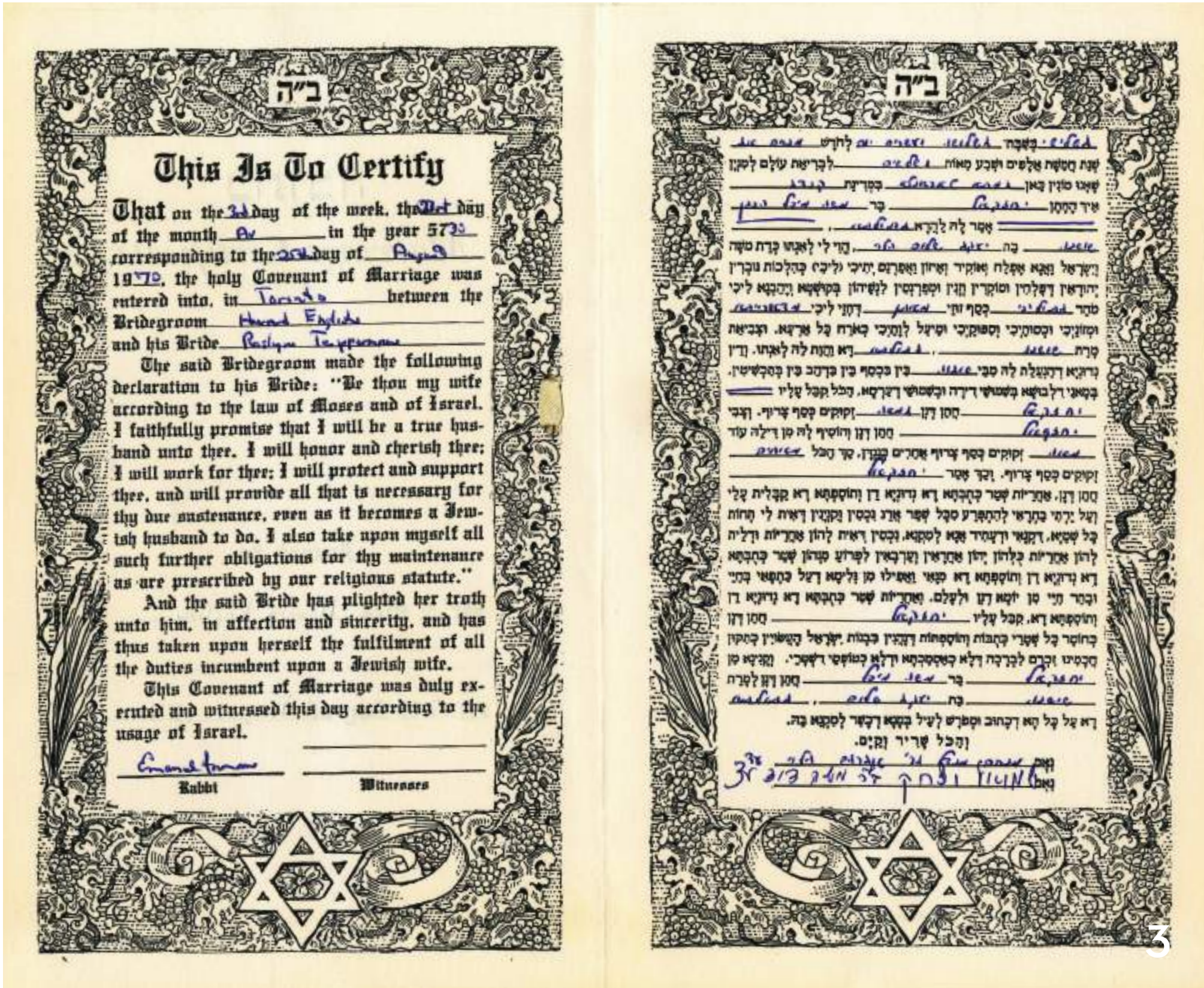


# GETTING READY

1. Hamilton-born Eunice Garshowitz gazes into the mirror as her sister Goldie Greenspan-Glayt (née Garshowitz) puts the finishing touches on the bride at the Garshowitz family home, 30 Saint Anne's Road, Toronto, 1948. Freedman Family Collection. OJA, 2008-7-3.
2. Bella Spivak (centre) and daughters Clara and Thelma "Macey" sew the bride's veil, Brooklyn, New York, ca. 1935. Levy Family Collection. OJA, 2016-4-2.

3. Bride, Eunice Garshowitz, stands with her sister, maid of honour Goldie Greenspan-Glayt (née Garshowitz) and flower girl Judy Halpern (m. Miller), Toronto, 1948. OJA, 2008-7-3.
4. Eunice Garshowitz and North Bay-born William "Bill" Freedman, depart for their wedding ceremony held at the B'nai Israel Congregation (Shaw Street Synagogue), Toronto, 1948. OJA, 2008-7-3. The married couple started out in Toronto but eventually moved to North Bay where they raised their family and owned and operated a retail furniture store.





# KETUBAH & BEDEKEN

A *ketubah* is a legally binding document under Jewish law that is signed in addition to the civic marriage licence obtained from the province. It is traditionally meant to serve as the groom's detailed guarantees to the bride, intended to protect women and their interests in a male-oriented society. Today, couples choose various kinds of language that best reflect their values and commitment to each another. *Ketubahs* can be adorned and created as unique artworks, indicating the couple's taste and style. The *ketubah* is signed before the ceremony with two witnesses present and is typically followed by the

*bedeken*, the veiling ceremony when the groom finally sees the bride after a customary week-long separation. At the *bedeken*, the groom covers the bride's face with a veil signifying his commitment to the bride's inner and outer beauty. The *ketubah* is read under the *chuppah* by the rabbi as part of the ceremony.

- Portrait of the groom, Phil Epstein, taking one last look at his bride Molly Fiber during the *bedeken*, veiling ceremony, Toronto, 21 Dec. 1958. OJA, 2018-5-15.
- Reading of the *ketubah* (Jewish marriage contract) by Rabbi Meir Grunwald of Shlomei Emunei Yisroel Yeshiva, at the marriage of Valerie Netzer and Arthur Rosenthal, Toronto, May 1950. OJA, 2018-6-26.
- Ketubah for the marriage of Roslyn Tepperman and Howard English, officiated by Rabbi Emmanuel Forman, 25 Aug. 1970. OJA, 2018-6-11.
- Bedeken*, veiling ceremony, at the marriage of Sandra Gold to Harvey Roff, Rabbi Gross of Congregation B'nai Jacob officiating, Niagara Falls, 5 Jun. 1966. OJA, 2008-11-15.
- Signing of the wedding register at the marriage of Sally Greisman to Larry Brenzel, Congregation Goel Tzedec (University Avenue Synagogue), Toronto, 25 Jun. 1950. OJA, fonds 68, item 68.





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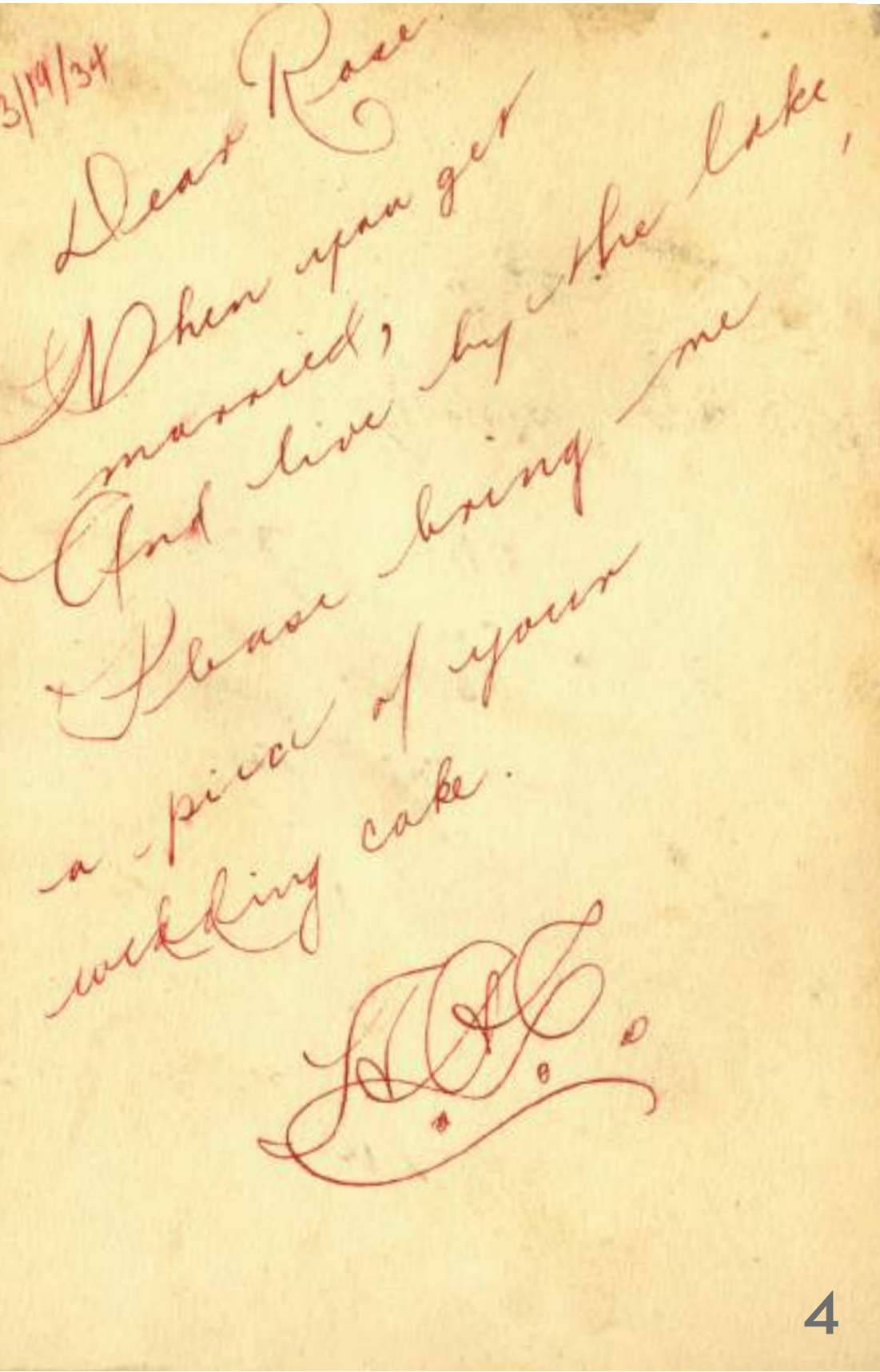
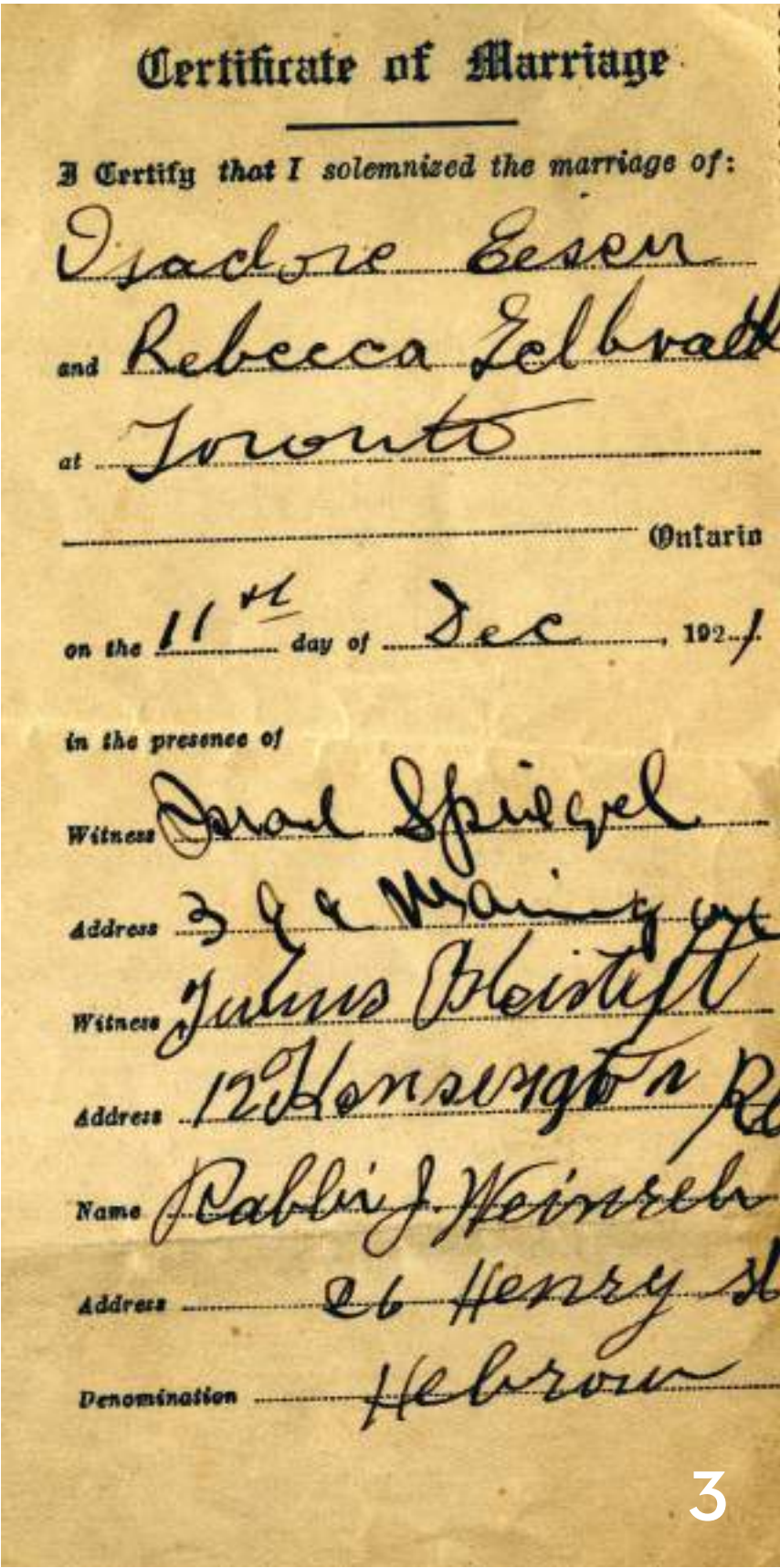
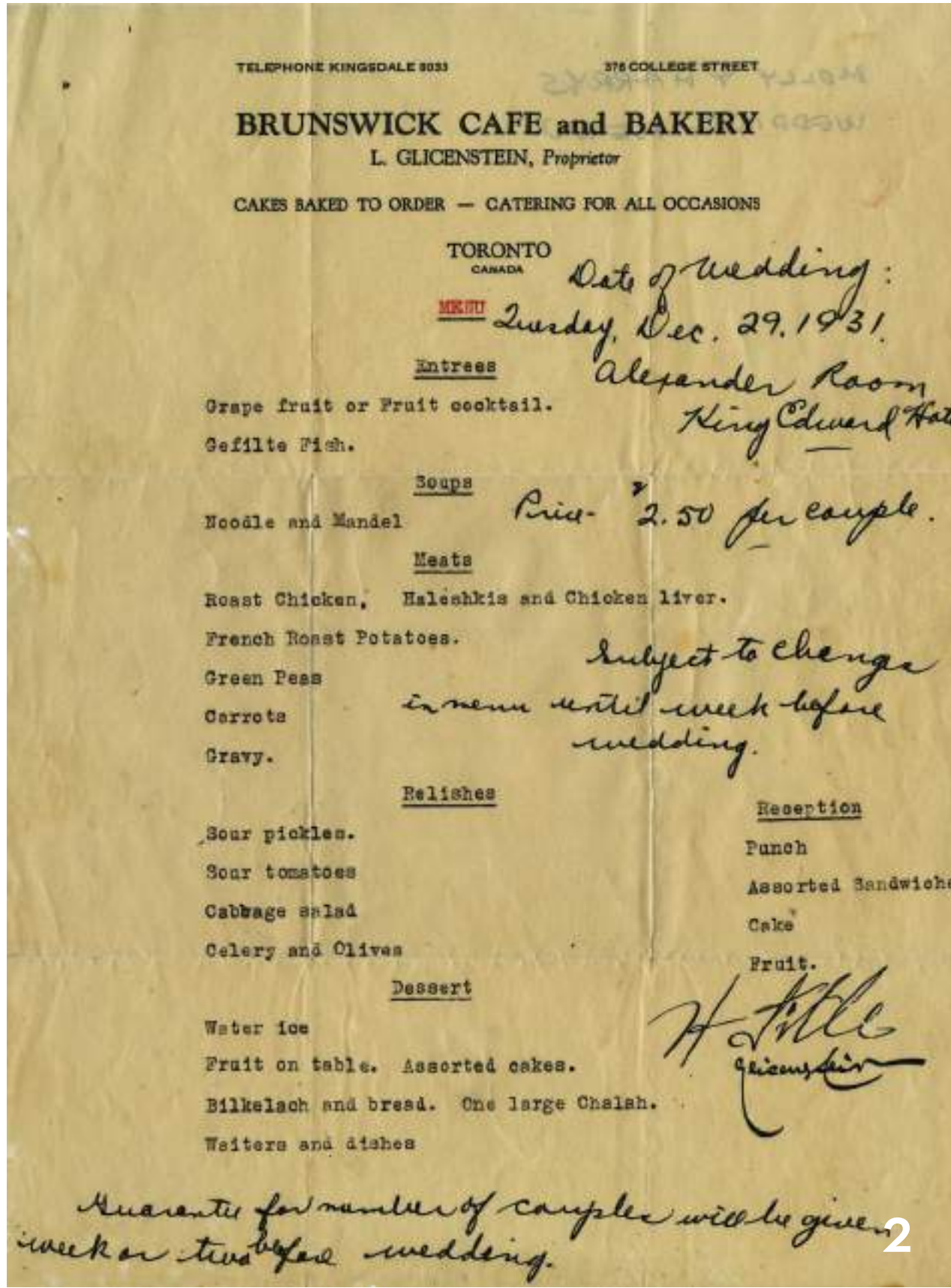
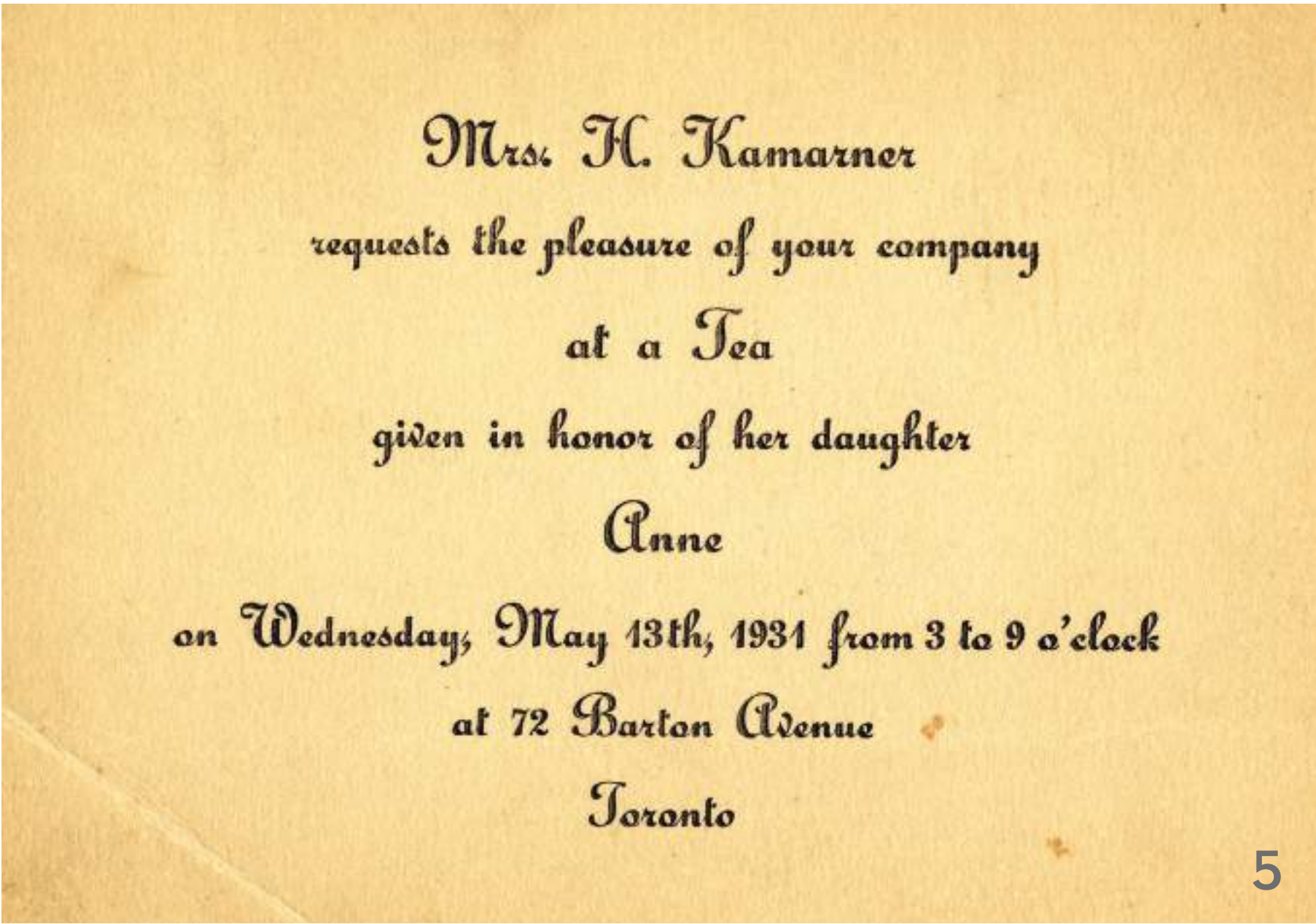
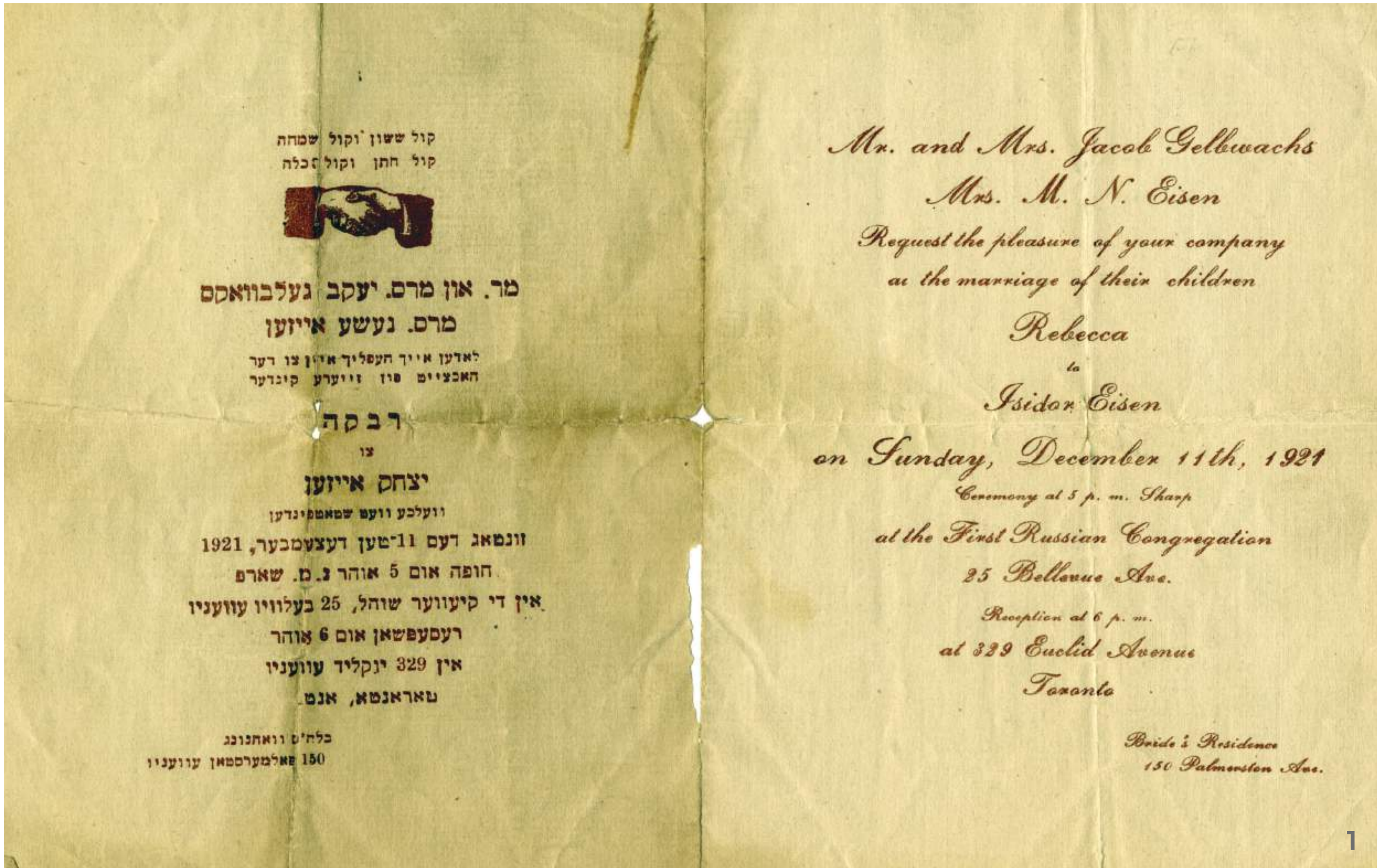
# RECEPTION CELEBRATION

For the most part, the celebratory reception following the wedding reflects the marriage and party trends of the day: an ornate tiered cake, a meal, speeches and dancing. However, there are a number of key elements unique to a Jewish wedding celebration, the highlight and probably most anticipated of which is dancing the hora to the song “Hava Nagilla.” Guests gather in a circle and the couple are raised up and down on chairs in the centre. Additionally, there is often a *motzi* (the blessing for food) said over an oversized challah, usually by a family elder.

1. The bride and groom's grandfathers Joseph Kirshbaum (left) and Yida Chapnick recite the *motzi* (the blessing for food) over the challah at the wedding reception of Roslyn and Howard English, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, Toronto, 20 Aug. 1970. Photograph by Morrison Studios. OJA, 2018-6-11.
2. Rabbi Schild recites the *motzi* over the challah at the wedding of Margaret Shachter and Al Goodman, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, ca. 1950. Identified left of Rabbi Schild is Laura Schild, Seymour Shachter and Beatrice Shachter. OJA, item 3750.
3. Dancing the hora at the wedding reception of Michelle Samuel and Aaron English, Copper Creek Golf Club, Kleinburg, 18 Nov. 2007.

4. Roslyn and Howard English dance the hora at their wedding reception, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, Toronto, 20 Aug. 1970. Photograph by Morrison Studios. OJA, 2018-6-11.
5. Roslyn and Howard English cutting their wedding cake, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 20 Aug. 1970. Photograph by Morrison Studios. OJA, 2018-6-11.
6. Ed and Beatrice Magder (née Rain) cutting their wedding cake, Adath Israel Synagogue, Toronto, 26 Sept. 1948. OJA, item 4333.
7. Daniel Gotlib and Jonathan Wilder dance the hora at their wedding reception, 11 Nov. 2017. Photograph by Bruna Sanches, Simply Lace Photography. OJA, 2018-7-1.





# WEDDING EPHEMERA

Examining textual records from the OJA's collection helps fill in the gaps of evolving wedding practices not easily gleaned from photographs alone. This small grouping of textual records reveals popular trends from the first half of the twentieth century including a multilingual invitation written in Yiddish and English that would have been common for the period. Take a closer look at these records. What do you see? Is the English invitation a literal translation of the Yiddish? Consider what is the same and what is different compared to the weddings you attend today. For instance, how different is the wedding reception menu plan from 1931? Look closely; you may see a clue in the price!

1. Yiddish and English language invitation from the wedding of Rebecca Gelbwachs and Isador Eisen, Toronto, 11 Dec. 1921. OJA, 1978-12-4.
2. Menu plan and catering quote from the wedding of Molly Fishman and Harry Title, King Edward Hotel, 29 Dec. 1931. OJA, 2015-10-4.
3. A portion of the wedding certificate belonging to Rebecca Gelbwachs and Isador Eisen, Toronto, 11 Dec. 1921. OJA, 1978-12-4.
4. A page from Rose Friedman's autograph book, Kirkland Lake, 17 Mar. 1934. OJA, 1980-11-2.

5. Tea held in honour of Anne Kamarner's upcoming marriage, 13 May 1931. OJA, fonds 11, file 4, item 1.
6. Thank you card from Lorraine and Hymie Himmil, ca. 1950s. OJA, 2018-5-14.
7. Autographed program from stag "Whoopie Dinner and Night of Blissful Freedom" held in honour of Lou Krugel's upcoming marriage to Pearl Dean, Chudleigh House, Toronto, 1 Jun. 1936. OJA, 2018-4-4.





# THE CHUPPAH

A Jewish wedding ceremony takes place underneath an intricately decorated canopy called a *chuppah*. The *chuppah* rests on four poles and is open on all sides to signify that the couple's home will be open to guests. When the bride first enters the *chuppah*, she is led around the groom seven times. The circling signifies the seven days of creation, the creation of a new home, and the couple becoming one. The Kabbalah, the ancient Jewish mystical tradition, teaches that circling represents the intertwining of the partners' souls. Today, this action of circling is often performed by both partners

with both taking turns circling each other. In the Sephardic tradition, no circling takes place. While the *chuppah* is the name for the physical canopy, it is also the term used to describe the whole of the wedding ceremony, which is divided into two parts: *kiddushin* (betrothal and exchange of rings) and *nisu'in* (matrimony).

1. Grand interior of Congregation Goel Tzedec (University Avenue Synagogue), with newlyweds Sally Greisman and Larry Brenzel walking back up the aisle at the conclusion of their wedding ceremony, Toronto, 25 Jun. 1950. OJA, fonds 68, item 67.
2. Newlyweds David Leibman and Goldie Balinson kiss after the breaking of the glass concluding their wedding ceremony, Beth Jacob Synagogue, Hamilton, 11 Oct. 1953. OJA, item 1915.
3. A dramatic scene unfolds on the steps of the Henry Street Synagogue at the outdoor chuppah (wedding ceremony) of Pearl Langner, daughter of Rabbi Moishe and Rivka Langner, and Rabbi Jochanan Twersky, Beth Jacob Congregation (Henry Street Synagogue), 3 Mar. 1928. OJA, 2011-3-9.
4. Exchange of rings under the chuppah at the marriage of Ethel Gray to Jack Halter, officiated by Rabbi M. Zimmerman, Apter Synagogue, 216 Beverley St., Toronto, 29 May 1949. OJA, item 1545.





# GOING AWAY OUTFITS

A one-time popular tradition, going-away outfits were additional items on the bride and groom's wedding list. Toward the end of the reception, the bride and groom would steal away in their gown and tuxedo and return in their coordinated going-away outfits. Whether classic in style or following fashion trends of the day, store-bought or custom-made, newlyweds typically paired their re-entry into the reception with the bouquet toss.

Frances Ackerman pictured above (left) recollects, "I had two suits custom-made by Mr. Goldfarb; one was grey, and the other was a reddish brown. I wore the grey one going away, and in fact wore each of them for at least ten years. They were a very classic style, and so never seemed to look 'dated,' at least I didn't think so."

1. Frances Ackerman with tailor Mr. Goldfarb, Sep. 1954. Photograph by Dr. John E. Ackerman, OJA, 2013-4-6.
2. Howard and Roz English (née Tepperman) pose to wave goodbye in their going-away outfits, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, 20 Aug. 1970. Photograph by Morrison Studios. OJA, 2018-6-11.
3. Eric and Brenda Bornstein (née Rosenbaum) prepare for the bouquet toss wearing their coordinated going-away outfits, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda, 100 Elder Street, Toronto, 30 Nov. 1971. Photograph by Benny Adler. OJA, 2018-6-16.
4. Dressed in their going-away outfits, Margaret Warren tosses the bouquet with her groom Les Singer at her side, Dewbourne Avenue, Toronto, 5 Nov. 1967. Photograph by Ross Photography, OJA, 2018-6-9.
5. Bunny and Jetta Bergstein (née Warnick) pose in their going away-outfits outside of Jetta's home, 72 Barton Street, Toronto, 1 Jun. 1949. Photograph by Joe Black, Graphic Artists Studio. OJA, 2018-6-22.





# BUNNY & JETTA'S WEDDING ALBUM

Bunny Bergstein recounted, "The first words I said to my wife were 'shut up.'" It was 1942 and Bunny was a counsellor at Camp Yungvelt. He was on night duty when he first met Jetta Warnick, a rambunctious camper. The following summer while visiting the Colony cottages adjacent to Camp Yungvelt, he again met up with Jetta, now a first-year counsellor. But romance would have to wait. Bunny joined the Royal Canadian Air Force later that same year serving as a radar operator in Newfoundland. It was fall 1945 when Bunny returned home and received an invitation from his buddy, Harry Gorman, to join him and his date for a Saturday night movie. By that time, everyone

Bunny knew was either married or engaged, and then he thought of Jetta. Lucky for him, she was free. They became engaged in 1946 and married on June 1, 1949, at Toronto's Bais Yehuda Synagogue. After sixty-nine years of marriage, Jetta recently reflected, "I couldn't have picked a better one."

1. Bridal party from left: Sheila Dickstein, Maxine Saunders, Jetta Bergstein, Carrie Grossman and Bess Gershman, at the bride's home, 72 Barton Street, Toronto.
2. Ring ceremony, with Rabbi Abraham Kelman officiating and Rita (Bunny's mother) and Borris Litman standing behind the groom, Bais Yehuda Synagogue, 805 Dovercourt Road.
3. Jetta getting a helping hand from her "Pa," Sam Warnick, Bais Yehuda Synagogue.
4. Receiving line, Bais Yehuda Synagogue.
5. Bunny and Jetta Bergstein cutting their wedding cake, Bais Yehuda Synagogue.
6. Maid of honour, Carrie Grossman (née Bergstein), stands behind the bride, Jetta Warnick, 72 Barton Street.
7. Newlyweds' first kiss after the traditional breaking of the glass, Bais Yehuda Synagogue.
8. Honeymoon-bound, Bunny and Jetta Bergstein pose for a going-away photo. Destination: Atlantic City.
9. Procession of the bride: Jetta Warnick followed by her parents Rose and Sam Warnick. Jetta was determined to break with convention and invited her mother Rose to walk down the aisle with her father Sam, Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

Photographs by Joe Black, Graphic Artists Studio. From the Warnick and Bergstein Families Collection. OJA, 2018-6-22.