

Sacred Ground on de la Savane

Montreal's Baron de Hirsch Cemetery

Danny Kucharsky

[JEWISH STUDIES]

At the turn of the 20th century, more Jewish immigrants were arriving in Montreal than anywhere else on the continent, and the city's small middle-class Jewish community suddenly had to meet the burial needs of many new, mostly poor, arrivals, who had little affiliation with the local congregations. Out of this crisis, the Baron de Hirsch Cemetery, one of Canada's largest Jewish cemeteries, was established on an undeveloped expanse of swampland in the heart of the city.

Published to mark the cemetery's centennial, *Sacred Ground on de la Savane* traces the growth of the many burial societies that make up the cemetery and explains how the institution tackles issues all Jewish cemeteries must face: security, burial rituals, modern management techniques, and monument repair.

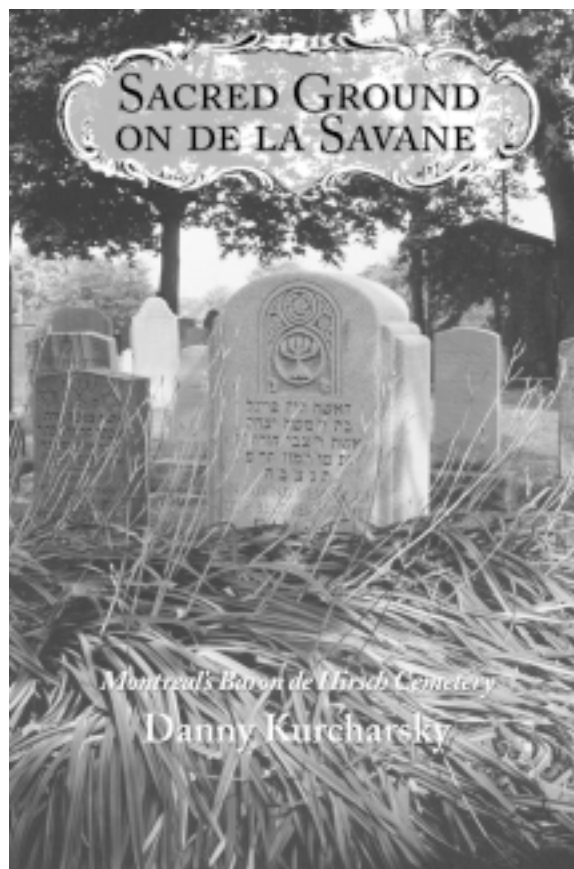
The Baron de Hirsch Cemetery is the home for a wide variety of individuals who have shaped the city and its Jewish community. Mini-profiles highlight some of the site's 75,000 residents including a Titanic victim, acclaimed poet A.M. Klein, a bagel maker, Yiddish Theatre of Montreal founder Dora Wasserman, gangster Harry Ship, a monument maker, and several politicians and artists.

The book concludes with a walking tour of the 40 acre site, in which the author takes us through the cemetery's fascinating but little known sites, including unmarked children's graves, the war veterans' field of honour, sacred burial huts housing the remains of learned rabbis, and memorials containing the ashes of Holocaust victims.

Sacred Ground on de la Savane is illustrated with archival photos and a 12-page duotone portfolio of photographs by D.R. Cowles.

An award-winning Montreal journalist, **Danny Kucharsky** has written on staff and as a freelancer for over 50 magazines, newspapers and travel books in Canada and the United States.

The work of Montreal photographer **D.R. Cowles** is represented in numerous collections, including the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography.



A PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE BOOK



D. R. COWLES