



Happy 150th Canada! 1867-2017



Jewish Canadian Involvement



by Rochelle Burns, PhD ©

We are the People of the Book.

Can there be a more fitting way for us to link to this July 1st 150th birthday for the magnificent country in which we live! (Yes, there could have been. We could have talk about the contributions Jewish people made at the Confederation table. Alas, political restrictions on Jews, at that time, were such we were not at that table.)

But Jews did move Canada forward by supporting, supplying, sacrificing for education -- in endless areas.

An example of the inexhaustible Jewish Canadian contribution to moving our country, and the world, forward through education was University of Toronto Professor C.C. "Kelly" Gotlieb. Regarded as the "father of computing in Canada," he was the first director of the Computer Science Department begun in 1964.

Gotlieb played a fundamental role in bringing Canadians into the modern age of computing: Air Canada adopted one of the first computerized airline reservation systems; Toronto adopted the first computerized traffic light system in the world; postal codes became computerized; and U of T's digitized card catalogue was adopted by the US Library of Congress.

Gotlieb also had the vision to recognize that computers would have profound impacts on society that needed to be understood and planned for.

In 1958 the Oxford English Dictionary credited Gotlieb and his colleague Pat Hume for twelve seminal computer words, such as: Block, Character, and Keyboard.

He showed the People of the Book revere education, from the past and to the future. Undoubtedly, Canada has benefited from this eternal Jewish outlook.

Dr. Burns is a social historian and member of Temple Emanu-El



Canada's "Father of Computing," C.C. "Kelly" Gotlieb: photo credit U of T