

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



JGSCV

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE CONEJO VALLEY AND VENTURA COUNTY

April 2015

Volume 10 Issue 7

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Janette Silverman gave an erudite and interesting presentation about the archives of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. As Janette's handout (which is posted to the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org under meetings-prior and date) said the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) is off the radar-screen for many genealogists. The JTS is home to almost one-half million volumes of works of genealogical interest including manuscripts, rare books, ketubahs, Jewish community records in the US and Europe and much more. See page 6 for highlights from her presentation.

Thank you to Karen Lewy, JGSCV Treasurer who gave an informative 5-minute genealogical hint on "Using Death Certificates". Karen reviewed the information usually found using a Philadelphia, PA death certificate. By using a spreadsheet with names and possible death dates she contacted the cemetery listed on death certificates where she was able to find additional family members buried. Her presentation can also be found on the JGSCV website as noted above. Included there are some additional hints to remember.

Thank you to Warren Blatt for facilitating the schmoozing corner before the start of the meeting.

JGSCV's webmaster, David Oseas, surprised the JGSCV Board by redesigning our website and bringing it into the 21st century! It is

Dr. Janette
Silverman,
Outreach
Director for the
William
Davidson
Graduate
School of Jewish
Education of
The Jewish
Theological
Seminary.
JGSCV's March
speaker



NEXT MEETING

Sunday, April 12th 1:30-3:30 PM

Remember the Holocaust Using USHMM Records

Megan Lewis presents how to use US Holocaust Memorial Museum resources to learn and understand more about the lives of family members who were victims.

WWW.JGSCV.ORG

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JGSCV is a non-profit organization dedicated to collecting, preserving and disseminating genealogical information, techniques and research tools among people interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Anyone interested in Jewish genealogy, regardless of religion, is welcome to become a member.

now viewable with a full screen on any mobile device or computer. See page 17 for more information. When you next attend a meeting, thank David for his wonderful gift to JGSCV of his expertise and web design skills.

At the board meeting earlier in March, the Board finalized our 2015 budget and determined requested meeting dates that we have been provided to Temple Adat Elohim. As protocol, they will advise us in May of the dates available to JGSCV after which they will be published on the website and in *Venturing Into Our Past*.

The Board decided to try a two-month experiment with our traveling library and we need **your** feedback on how to proceed. For the next two-months only the Category A books (18 distinct titles) will be available at the meetings. The majority of the board thought that the large number of books on display at the meetings might be “overwhelming” for newer genealogists and some books do not lend themselves to be read briefly at the meeting. To see more about this go to page 5.

Also discussed at that Board meeting is a project to attract younger people to our meetings. Founding member Werner Frank introduced the project and his proposal can be read on page 10 in its entirety. The Board decided to contact three synagogues—to be determined—and hold one program at each for the parents of children while the children were in Hebrew/Sunday School. If the synagogues agree, we will hold the programs in the Fall when the children are back in school. JGSCV Founding member, Werner Frank and Karen Franklin, Director, Family Research Project, Leo Baeck Institute, were the speakers at the inaugural program of JGSLA’s GER-SIG. Whether or not you are researching German heritage you will find the story on page 11 of interest.

As part of our World War 1 and World War 2 commemoration, JGSCV member Joanne Cadis has an article on page 8. If you have a story about you, or one of your ancestors from one of these conflicts please submit them for publication to newslettereditor@jgscv.org

Since our inception, Temple Adat Elohim has been, and continues to be, a wonderful co-sponsor of the JGSCV programs. After a two-year search, they have chosen a new rabbi—Rabbi Andrew Straus. To read more about this, the departure of Rabbi Dubowe, and Interim Senior Rabbi Barry Diamond see page 17.

If you have not yet paid your 2015 dues or wish to join JGSCV please do so. Membership forms are available on our website and at the meetings.

Each year JGSCV commemorates Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) with a special program. Our annual Yom Hashoah program will be held on April 12. Megan Lewis, Reference Librarian, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington D.C.) will be talking on: “*Remembering the Holocaust Through Family History Using the Resources of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*”. The actual date for Yom Hashoah is April 16. See page 4 for more information.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors have a very happy Passover, and for our non-Jewish members, have a Happy Easter. Looking forward to seeing you after the holidays on April 12!

Jan Meisels Allen

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



What Cousin Are You?

Have you ever been confused about how certain relatives are related? The State Library of North Carolina has a cousin chart that can help you determine familial relationships starting from a common ancestor.
<http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/ghl/resources/genealogy/cousinchart.html>

DNA Solves 102 Year Old Story of Switched Babies

In 1913, in a New York City hospital, two babies were switched---and 102 years later DNA solved the case. The Irish child raised Jewish and the Jewish child raised Irish Catholic. Read the stories of both families. Alice: <http://www.yourgeneticgenealogist.com/2015/02/switched-at-birth-unravelling-century-27.html>

Jess: <https://strangepilgrimage.wordpress.com/2015/01/22/and-who-wouldve-thought-it-figures/>

And in Hungary . . .

The Hungarian website "flodni" merges Hungarian and Jewish traditions and has images of films, and links about the rich traditional life of Jews in Hungary.
http://magyarzsido.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1

Also, The Budapest Holocaust Museum includes *The Holocaust in Hungary: A Location Encyclopedia 1941-1944*

<http://zsidomult.hu/> (Jewish past in Hungarian). The webpage subtitles (from the left) are history, ghettoization, deportation, Budapest, Saggitaius era (location) numbers, appendix, names and resources. (Trianon Hungary 1938-1941 will eventually be added.)

While these websites are in Hungarian, they are easy to navigate. Also, if you use Chrome as your browser and right click there is an easily accessible link to translate into English.

Documenting Research

All of us need to document where we obtained our information including vital records resources. While a necessity, documenting need not be difficult. The Board for Certification of Genealogists has a quick methodology to document in a footnote: <http://bcgcertification.org/blog/2015/03/ten-minute-methodology-proof-in-a-footnote/>

Gesher Galicia Maps

The Gesher Galicia SIG has an excellent map room as part of its website. It includes not only cadastral maps of towns within what was Galicia but also historical railway maps where one can zoom into see possible routes our ancestors traveled. The map room is updated frequently. See: <http://maps.geshergalicia.org>

ABOUT JGSCV

JGSCV meets once a month, usually on a Sunday. Meetings are oriented to the needs of the novice as well as the more experienced genealogist. Members share materials, research methods and ideas as well as research success or failures. **MISSION STATEMENT:** The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV) is a non-profit organization run by enthusiastic volunteers dedicated to the sharing of genealogical information, techniques and research tools with those interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Members who include beginners and experienced genealogists share with each other. **JGSCV MEMBERSHIP:** 2015 dues are \$25 for a single membership and \$30 for a household. To join, please printout the membership form on our website www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button. Send it with a check in the appropriate amount payable to "JGSCV" and mail to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301.

Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County* (JGSCV) (*and surrounding areas)

The JGSCV will hold a general meeting, co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim, on Sunday, April 12, 2015 at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, 1:30-3:30 p.m.



Annual Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom Hashoah) Commemoration

The Topic: Remembering the Holocaust through Family History Using the Resources of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Holocaust remembrance and Jewish genealogy closely intertwine. Arthur Kurzweil wrote, "When the Nazis rounded up our relatives, they took away their names and gave them numbers. What we genealogists are doing is taking away the numbers and giving them back their names." By "giving back their names" family historians humanize the history of the Holocaust in ways historians do not, often capturing the interest of the general public and thus furthering Holocaust remembrance. Megan Lewis will look at ways genealogists can use the resources at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum such as oral histories to find the details of their ancestor's lives that show the history on the human level. She will demonstrate how to use the Museum's online resources to do research from home and give tips on how to plan a research trip to Washington.



Speaker: Megan Lewis started working at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1998. She spent 12 years conducting research on individuals working for the Museum's Holocaust Survivors and Victims Resource Center. Since 2010 she works as a reference librarian in the Museum Library and Archives reading rooms. She has a BA in history and a Masters of Library Science, and has given presentations about the Museum's genealogical resources at IAJGS Conferences, numerous genealogical societies, the American Library Association conference, and several conferences/workshops about Nazi looted art.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Annual dues are \$25 for an individual and \$30 for a family.

JGSCV UPDATES

Library News:

1. JGSCV's Bylaws require an annual review of assets. Our greatest material assets are our two library collections. This month, Issie Perel, JGSCV Librarian, and Jan Meisels Allen did the annual audit of our books and pamphlets in our permanent library. While originally, we thought one book was missing, the librarians found it had been inappropriately "reshelved" in the library's resource area rather than JGSCV's area. Final analysis: our inventory showed no JGSCV book or pamphlet missing from the permanent library. We are delighted that the books are being used in the library by members and the general public. An annual inventory was also performed on the Traveling Library and we also found no missing books. We will be doing an inventory on our journals and newsletters in the near future.
2. As mentioned in the president's letter, we will begin a two-month experiment where only the Category A books (18 distinct titles) will be brought to the meetings. We need *your* feedback (email president@jgscv.org) before making a final decision. The choices are below. Let us know your preference.
 - * Only Category A, **OR**
 - * Alternate each month Category A with one other Category- for example Categories A+B or A+C or A+D at each meeting; (This is what we did before we transferred the majority of the books to the permanent library), **OR**
 - * Go back to bringing the full traveling library

About 100 books are brought to each meeting-categorized A,B,C and D. "J" is used to designate books from Jan Meisels Allen's personal collection. Each category is about equal in number. The books in categories B, C, D, the majority of which may not be placed in the permanent library (located at the Agoura Hills Library), due to fragility, being out of print, or cost of replacing. When we transferred the majority of the books to the permanent library, we also kept a selection in each category. (See www.jgscv.org and click on traveling library to see what is in the collection.)

JGSCV continues to participate with both Amazon.com as an affiliate and with Ralphs Community Program. Simply enter the Amazon site from any of JGSCV's webpages. Start at <http://www.jgscv.org> and scroll to the bottom to click on the Amazon graphic (like the one below). This takes you to the same page you always start at – at no cost website except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee to you. See "notices" on the JGSCV.org for instructions for Ralphs Community Contribution Program, too.



Remember, the SCHMOOZING CORNER is open 20 minutes before the monthly meeting is scheduled to begin. Just come to the front right corner of the meeting room and look for the "SCHMOOZING CORNER" sign where you will find Werner Frank this week. Werner will field your individual questions and provide one-to-one help until the meeting begins.

CORRECTION: Last issue, we welcomed new member Dianna Rice – but misspelled her name. **JGSCV RE-Welcomes Dianna!**

Highlights from Ancient Texts Lead to Genealogical Discoveries: The Lives Our Ancestors Led

By Jan Meisels Allen

Dr. Janette Silverman, Outreach Director for the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education of The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York City gave an excellent presentation about the JTS archives and what is available both remotely from the website as well as what must be viewed in person, by appointment at the JTS. The archives are a treasure yet to be explored by so many of us and yet it is a rich repository of records of Jewish communities, institutions and prominent individuals in the US and Europe.

The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)

The JTS was founded in 1886 through the efforts of two distinguished rabbis, Dr. Sabato Morais and Dr. H. Pereira Mendes, along with a group of prominent lay leaders from Sephardic congregations in Philadelphia and New York. Its mission was to preserve the knowledge and practice of historical Judaism. In 1887, JTS held its first class of ten students in the vestry of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue, New York City's oldest congregation. The JTS



has since expanded its mission and today it is a prestigious center of Jewish Learning—a Jewish University which for the past century serves Conservative Judaism. To read more about the history see: http://www.jtsa.edu/About_JTS/History.xml

The Jewish Theological Seminary Library

The JTS Library was founded in 1893 and the JTS Library is recognized as the largest Jewish library outside of Israel with hundreds of thousands of books and tens of thousands of rare books, manuscripts and more. Special collections include ketubot, haggadot and more. But what is of most interest to genealogists is the collection and the efforts to collect the cultural heritage. While this started in 1903, what is most important is the collection from the 1930's when the war clouds in Europe were stirring and the anti-Semitism was rising. To view the JTS's Library and its collections see: http://www.jtsa.edu/The_Library.xml. The intent is to eventually — and hopefully soon - digitize much of the collection once measures necessary for conservation are implemented in order to maintain these valuable and irreplaceable materials.

How one may search online is included in the handout that Janette provided which is on the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org under meetings and prior with the March 1 date.

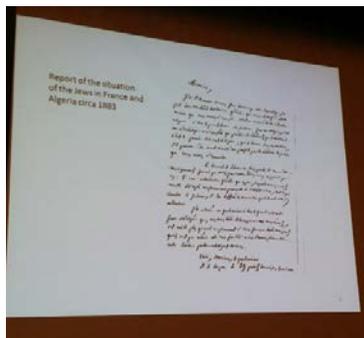
The JTS website to view these treasures is: <http://jtslibrarytreasures.org/>. The opening page shows a bookcase with “select a book” on the right. There, one can chose the book and it opens. One such book is the Prato Haggadah from Spain circa 1300. Other books on the shelf that may be opened are the Women’s Seddur, Esslingen Mahzor and the Rothschild Mahzor.

The archival collection is a collection of donated materials and purchased materials. Taken as a whole, it is a collection of random collections, that is, the collection in its entirety was not designed prior to acquisition.

The State Department Records

Janette discussed some of the notes, memos and correspondence between the US State Department and offices in Vienna, St. Petersburg, Warsaw and Bucharest from 1861-1906. As these were correspondence between US government offices, they are all in English—unlike some of the other items in the archives. These records showed that anti-Semitism in

Russia was known by the US Department of State in the 19th century—way before the Shoah. These records are not digitized, but may be studied by appointment at the Library. The records are on onionskin paper, and thus very frail. Photographs of these transcripts are prohibited, but one can read and take notes as well as listen to recordings. Janette showed a title page of the “Russo-Jewish question in the speech of the Honorable Samuel S. Cox (Congressman from Ohio) in the House of Representatives July 31, 1882 on the persecution of the Jews in Russia. Janette also showed a paper for the departure of Jews from Russia 1851 from the *National Intelligencer* which reported several



April, 2015

Tsarist imperial ukases (decrees) forbidding Jews from donning distinctive Jewish form of dress, outlawing Jewish women from cutting their hair etc.

Janette discussed a 1901 notice regarding naturalized US citizens who were born in Russia. It said Jews were not allowed to enter Russia except by special permission and those of the Jewish race must have a US passport, and be given a visa by the Russian consulate in order to enter. When entering Russia, after showing the visa, a permit to sojourn is issued. That permit must be presented at least 24 hours before departure, in order to receive permission to leave Russia. The concern of course, would be whether the person would be permitted to get the visa from the Russian Consulate and be able to leave Russia.

Another report talked of a riot in Bialystok where 75 Jews were killed, 60 Jews hurt, 15 Christians killed and 169 Jewish shops were destroyed. Seventy-five percent of the 100,000 people who lived in Bialystok were Jewish.

Other Papers

The archives have documents from Swiss cantons. One document is from 1865 written by Israelite (Jewish) citizens of Switzerland who wrote to the United States offering expressions of sympathy on the assassination of President Lincoln.

In the 1870’s there were reports of anti-semitism in Romania. The government in Constantinople said this was not a religious issue but an economic issue and was a response to immigrants taking jobs belonging to locals. Other reports gave Jews rights to purchase property.

In 1893 part of the US Immigration policy included the prohibition of Jews being given money as an incentive to immigrate to the US, but Jews could accept money from family or use their own money in order to have the necessary funds to be allowed to land.

French Community Records From 1648-1946

Janette displayed a newspaper article from the *New York Observer* dated October 1844 on the “*State of Jews in France and Some Other Countries in Europe*” which stated that Jewish worship in France is connected with the State and paid by the state—the only place in the world that does this. Rabbis received payment as did priests and pastors.

Another document Janette discussed, was in French called the “*Report of the Situation of Jews in France and Algeria*—written sometime between 1870 and 1905.

There are non-French Jewish records, but they are not indexed.

There are also chilling records from World War II and its aftermath. These include settling Jews in villages in 1941 and in 1943 being interred in Drancy.

The JTS catalog has 258 documents listed as “France”, “French/Yiddish”. Examples include the aforementioned Jews in France and Algeria; 19th Century Pinchas of Women’s Society in Metz and more.

Ketubot

The JTS has a fascinating collection of Ketubot, the Jewish marriage contract. The collection ranges from the 15th to the 20th century. Styles change but certain information is included in all: name of bride and groom, parents, locale and date of marriage. In the middle ages public reading of Ashkenazi ketubot started and it was considered a legal requirement. There were little, if any, decorative parts on the document.

On the other side, Sephardic ketubot, were more elaborate and decorative. The document included the dowry and gifts and established social status. The JTS has ketubot

from 1493/1494 from the Iberian Peninsula—the time of the Inquisition. The collection also includes some from Italy in the 1600’s and Rogusa (today Dubrovnik) from the 1790’s. The colors and decoration can help determine where the ketubah was produced.

Mohel Books

The JTS has mohel books some from Amsterdam, the Hague, London and other cities—mostly Sephardic mohels. One book is almost 400 pages long with records in Hebrew with names indexed according to the Latin alphabet and by surname. Another mohel book was from Italy 1794-1809. Most of the books have to be viewed at the JTS in person, not online.

Mohel books include illustrations which may not be related to circumcision. Some include the art form of micrography. Micrography is a form of calligrams utilizing very small Hebrew letters to form designs. The books have prayers and instructions for the mohel including special circumstances, such as a



child who is unable to be circumcised at the 8th day due to illness or an adult converso having the procedure.

Janette has an article in the current issue of *Avotaynu* (Vol XXX #4, Winter 2014) “In Search of the French Connection”. JGSCV has a subscription to *Avotaynu* which is housed in our permanent collection at the Agoura Hills Library, a branch of the LA County Public Library.

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Elizabeth Klein: A Death March Survivor

By Joanne Cadis A story about her 96 year-old cousin

Elizabeth Klein, a young Jewish woman from Ostoros, Hungary, was deported to Auschwitz in May 1944. Eventually, she was taken to Gruenberg, another sub-camp of Gross Rosen. From Gruenberg she was put on a forced march to Helmbrechts, a sub-camp of Flossenbuerg. Soon after her arrival, she was put on a second forced march that ended in Volary, where she was liberated by units of the 5th Division, U.S. Third Army.

were to be abandoned.

After three weeks and 2-300 km of forced marching, the group reached Volary (Wallern). Fewer than half the prisoners survived. There are conflicting reports as to what happened next. According to Alois Doerr, the top-ranking SS officer who led the death march from Helmbrechts, the prisoners were split into three groups with the intention of marching all of them to Prachatitz. Those still able to walk

They were forced to march from 9-18 miles a day with little food.

As Allied troops closed in on Germany from all sides, many prisoners in concentration camps and slave labor commandos were evacuated from enemy lines by 'forced marches'. On January 29, 1945 most female prisoners of Gruenberg and Puerschkau were combined, given a blanket and force marched in the direction of the Flossenbuerg concentration camp. The remainder of the group was sent to Bergen-Belsen.

They were forced to march from 9-18 miles a day with little food. Some had only rags for shoes. Sleeping meant an unheated barn or out in the open. Several prisoners died each day from these conditions or were killed by brutal SS guards. Finally, on March 6, after five weeks of marching, the first group reached Helmbrechts, a sub-camp of Flossenbuerg, 300 km. from Gruenberg. Of the original 1,100 prisoners who set out on the death march, only 321 arrived at Helmbrechts. 230 had been left at other camps along the way; a few had escaped; and the remaining 150-250 had died.

During their five weeks at Helmbrechts, an additional 40 women died. On April 13, the remaining women joined the rest of the prisoners and were sent on a second death march in the direction of Prachatitz where they

were sent the following day, while the rest were to be transported by truck. The group on foot was abandoned just after Prachatitz, where locals cared for them. The truck transport, however, was strafed by American planes, killing one SS woman and wounding two others. Some of the prisoners fled, but 17 were not able to get away. Fourteen of them were killed the next day by the SS. That same day 12 other prisoners were shot by SS men in Volary. It is suspected that both incidents were in retaliation for the death of the SS woman the previous day. Finally, on May 6, the 2nd Regiment of the 5th Division, U.S. 3rd Army entered Volary and liberated between 118-133 women covered in lice lying on the floor. They had no potable water and only a wooden box in the corner as a toilet. The women were suffering from starvation, malnutrition, tuberculosis, typhus, heart trouble, blistered and gangrenous feet, festered wounds, diarrhea, and frostbite. American soldiers set up a hospital in Volary for treatment. On May 11, mass graves near Volary were discovered, and Germans were forced to exhume them in order to give the victims proper burial. Of the 83-89 bodies exhumed, many of them showed evidence of having been murdered.

An Open Letter to the Members of JGSCV

THOUGHTS ON ATTRACTING YOUNGER GENERATIONS TO GENEALOGY

The pursuit of genealogy research is for the most part a pastime for seniors whereas younger generations seem to show little interest. This dichotomy can be detrimental to building future membership in our Society as well as denying the pleasure and benefits that genealogical studies provide in building family relationships and family pride. I believe it is incumbent on us (as) members of JGSCV to be concerned about attracting the interest of our children and grandchildren in order to promote and retain family memories so that they will not fade away.

With this in mind, I have introduced this topic and challenge to the Board of JGSCV with the objective of creating a program that will broaden the genealogical interest amongst our multi generations.

While our children well be occupied

“It is never too late to start . . .”

may too with

careers and varied social obligations to become involved, this cannot be an excuse with respect to our grandchildren. Our Society should accept an obligation to instill within our youngest generation the same thrill, passion and interest in the pursuit of family history that we possess.

It is never too late to start this process, nor does it have to be overwhelming. So, get your thinking caps on and come up with suggestions that can get this rolling. In that vein, I offer some initial ideas that could kick off a meaningful program.

1. Devote one meeting a year for an intergenerational meeting that will capture the imagination of the membership's children and grandchildren through innovative programming. This might be volunteer presentations of a member with his/her child or grandchild offering a specific finding/family story, et al, In other words, a truly family project with JGSCV providing a platform for such a team.
2. Invite a local religious school('s) classes to one of our meetings and involve them in a program by offering a stage for presentations prepared through classroom studies that might be assisted by one of our members.
3. Create a prize for a student contest in Jewish genealogy that is open to synagogue schools in the local areas.
4. Offer a workshop for students at local schools.
5. Have students develop new approaches to genealogical research via the various social media.

I am sure that more and better ideas can evolve through our collective thinking. I invite you to communicate your ideas by contacting me at the email address below and I will carry your thoughts forward to the Board of JGSCV

Werner Frank
wlfank82@gmail.com



IAJS Conference registration is open and can be completed online at <http://iajgs2015.org>. Early registration ends April 14th

April, 2015

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

Inaugural GER-SIG Meeting

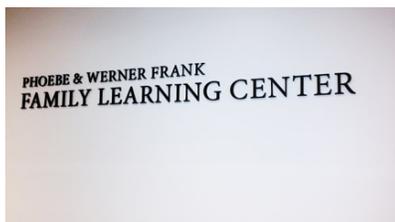
By Jan Meisels Allen

On March 8, our sister JGS, JGSLA, held an inaugural SIG (Special Interest Group) meeting at the American Jewish University (AJU) on Mulholland Drive in Los Angeles. This program focused on GER-SIG the German Special Interest Group of JewishGen, Inc. GER-SIG covers not only Germany, but also Austria-Czech, Alsace parts of France, and Switzerland—all German speaking countries.

JGSCV founding member Werner Frank, a founder of GER-SIG and a founding editor of *Stammbaum*, was one of the two presenters at this first SIG meeting. Also presenting was Karen Franklin, Director, Family Research Project, Leo Baeck Institute. Karen is also a member of GER-SIG and has presented at a number of conferences. Genealogy is not only about dates but also about how people lived and the times in which they lived. This program emphasized the opportunities available for German Jewish research as well as how people lived with artifacts from their past and how research can find unexpected results that may change lives!

Phoebe and Werner Frank Learning Center

Werner and Phoebe Frank endowed and created the Frank Learning Center as part of the Ostrow Academic



Library and the Burton Sperber Jewish Community Library of Los Angeles at the American Jewish University. Included in the Frank Learning Center is Werner's collection of 700 books and Judaica from their home. Adorning one of the walls is Werner's *Wimpel* and a challah cover stitched by

Werner's grandmother circa 1900. The *Wimpel* in the role of *Torah* binder was the product of a ceremony peculiar to Jews of southern Germany and nearby areas. This event took place when a boy reached his first birthday and was brought to the synagogue for a formal introduction to the community. How Werner has his *Wimpel* is an interesting story. In the spring of 1987, he received an unexpected letter revealing the surprising information that one of the *Torahs* from the beautiful Synagogue in Eppingen had been brought to New York in 1938 by another refugee family. "Rescued" might be an apt description since only one week later this *Torah's* sanctuary was desecrated and burned during the infamous *Kristallnacht* destruction.



The letter went on to say that the *Torah* had been preserved for fifty years in a Bronx closet and had finally been opened in preparation for delivery to a new sanctuary, a young congregation in Berkeley, California. Werner was informed that this *Torah* had been wrapped with the *Wimpel* of *Yehudah ben Dovid*, born 4 Juni 1929. Did he want his *Wimpel*! It is now displayed in the Learning Center. (The full story of Werner's *Wimple* is in *Venturing into Our Past*, January 2013 issue which may be accessed from the JGSCV.org website under newsletters)

The wallpaper in the room is a replica of the Frank family home in Germany. In addition, Judaica from the Frank's home is on display in the Learning Center.

The Franks created the Learning Center as neither their children nor grandchildren expressed an interest in genealogy—a

April, 2015

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

problem many of us have. What do we do with our years of research once we are gone? Werner was trying to plant the seed for others to donate their genealogy—books, memorabilia as well as their family trees and supporting documentation to the Frank Learning Center. When the American Jewish University completes its negotiations with the Southern California Jewish Historical Society they will have created a major venue for research for all those researching their Jewish roots in Los Angeles.

Included in the AJU Library are rare Yizkor Books which are kept in a separate locked area for safety. Books on the holocaust include Serge Klarsfeld's volumes listing Jews who had been transported from Drancy (France) to Auschwitz with names and dates. Klarsfeld was a Nazi hunter and expert on the fate of French Jewry during WW II. Another rarity is the book identifying Jews who were casualties serving in the German army during World War I.

Werner's Research Suggestions

Werner talked about the resources he used to find his family's papers. This included archival sources of real estate, tax and litigation papers—some of which were very difficult to read. He also found that most German Jewish genealogy was done by non-Jews—very different than Eastern European countries where Jewish genealogy is done by Jews. Locally, he suggested visiting the Immigrant Genealogy Society in Burbank (<http://www.immigrantgensoc.org/>) which was founded to help those searching their German ancestry.

GER-SIG itself has ancestral files of postings from their discussion which may be retrieved from the website or from the JewishGen SIG



April, 2015

archives. Additionally, there are a number of resources listed on the website which may be accessed at: <http://www.jewishgen.org/GerSIG/>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) also has archives that are helpful. (<http://www.ushmm.org/>) JGSCV's April 12th speaker is the USHMM research librarian, Megan Lewis (see page 4).

Stolpersteine

Werner also discussed "Stolpersteine", "stumbling blocks" that were created by Gunter Deming and are small, cobblestone-sized memorials for individual Holocaust victims—and survivors. The stones are placed in front of the former home of a Holocaust victim. There are about 50,000 Stolpersteines's in Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. (Werner gave a 5-minute genealogical hint on this topic at JGSCV's October 2014 meeting).

Included in the suggestions for researching German roots, Werner suggested looking at *Alemannia Judaica* (<http://www.alemannia-judaica.de/>) especially for small towns. He emphasized the importance of networking and to start with the JewishGen Family Finder looking at who is researching the same ancestral towns and to contact them even if the names they are researching are not the same as yours—as they might be neighbors and know something about them. Google is also an excellent research tool, by researching XXXX (the name of the town) genealogy or xxxx.de (the extension for Germany), write to the town archivist, mayor's office and tourism office.

Obermayer Award

The Obermayer German-Jewish Awards are given annually to non-Jews who have made outstanding voluntary contributions toward preserving and recording the Jewish history, heritage, culture and/or remnants of local German communities. The winners are listed on their website and contacting them for the geographic area of expertise is another

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

possible research aid. The awards have been given over the past 10 years and there are 5 awards given out annually. The website is: <http://www.obermayer.us/award/>

Karen Franklin

Karen also emphasized some of the same resources as Werner mentioned to use when researching. In her Google searches she added the word Jewish *or jüdische*. She suggested looking at Digibaek (<http://www.lbi.org/digibaek/>); the Leo Baeck Institute's online digitized archival collections, for an index that includes the text of finding aids. This should be accessed directly from the url given above because it provides results not found on the Center for Jewish History's website. The direct url for the Leo Baeck Institute is: <http://www.lbi.org/>. The general access search should also be used; it will include books in the search results.



Another resource Karen recommended is Lars Menk's Book, *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*, a copy, of which is in JGSCV's traveling library (category A) which is brought to each meeting. The JewishGen Discussion Group Archives is another helpful source. Karen also suggested reaching out to local town historians to visit the local museums for research—they may have materials not otherwise available and may not be digitized.

Karen also spoke about the Obermayer Awards and her personal experience with one of them—where sixth grade students were involved in researching the histories of over 1,000 children who were deported or lived in the area where their school is located Berlin-Schoenberg. The principal of the school, Christa Niclasen, received the Obermayer Award several years ago. Karen

April, 2015

was so inspired by the children who worked so hard on the project that she gave them childhood mementos from her father, who had lived in Berlin. She also gave them a brass nameplate from the door of the apartment where her great grandparents (and her grandmother) lived. Karen asked the children to find the apartment where her great grandparents had lived. Not only did they find the building, but they discovered the odd shape of the name plate embedded in old paint, still visible—outside the door of their former apartment. When Karen visited Germany one year later--in late January 2015--and went to the building, the hallways had recently been painted when a long-time resident had moved out— and the shape was no longer visible. If the children had not gone when they did the previous year, she would never have known. The current tenants of the apartment invited her in and she was able to visit the home of her great grandparents and to see first-hand how and where they lived and was surprised at the

“Don't forget a piece of sand in a clam makes a pearl”

size and elegance of the apartment.

Jon Stedman

The estate of Jon Stedman hired Karen to organize his Jewish genealogy research papers for donation to the American Jewish Archives and to write a book about his family. Jon did not know he was Jewish until later in life and he was an indefatigable researcher. When he died in 2009 he left sizable gifts to genealogical and historical organizations. The contributions were made to the IAJGS Stern Grant Program, JewishGen,

The American Jewish Archives and the Leo Baeck Institute. (As I was the person who was in touch with the Stedman estate executrix, I recommended Karen for the genealogy project of organizing his research papers and with which Jewish institutions received the donations.) If you want to read some of her research findings to date they are in *Dorot* The Journal of the Jewish Genealogy Society of NY Spring 2014 Vol. 35 Number 3. JGSCV has *Dorot* in our permanent library collection at the Agoura Hills Library. Karen, as expected, has done a marvelous job in her researching his family and organizing the papers.

Jon Stedman never married nor did he have children. Jon's father, John, was a bit of a scoundrel and left his first wife in New York City with their three children, changed his name and moved to the Midwest where he married twice more. Jon is a product of his father's second marriage and did not know that his father's real last name was Oppenheimer until he started his research. Jon's ancestors arrived in the US in the early 1800's and are related to many famous early Americans. Some of his ancestors led colorful lives and include the wife of a Jewish cousin who was a self-described Civil War spy.

What Karen also revealed was that Jon was one of the first FamilyTreeDNA clients, #68, and she used some of the funds to upgrade his DNA tests from 2001. (Today FamilyTree DNA has almost 750,000 clients and the largest Jewish DNA database.) And what a result! One person who contacted Karen—was an adoptee and wanted help identifying her birth mother—and with a result of over

290 cM matching it was definitely someone who was a close relative. The more centimorgans (cM) a person has, the higher the probability the person is related. Most of us are “happy” if we have a match with high 80-150cM but 290 is an eye-opener. The significance of a high cM match told the adoptee that Jon was in the range of a first to third cousin relationship. A very simplistic way to translate the cousin relationship is the adoptee only had to follow Jon's direct ancestor line up one to three levels. The adoptee and Jon matched on his father! As it turns out, she is a granddaughter of one of the children Jon's father abandoned in New York.

The adoptee used this information, Karen's assistance, and the assistance of an adoption search angel and made contact with her birth mother within three months of receiving back her DNA results. Her birth mother was raised Catholic and Karen is facilitating a reunion between the adoptee—Jon's cousin—and her birth mother. She wrote to Karen, “Don't forget a piece of sand in a clam makes a pearl” which is a wonderful expression for all of us genealogists to remember with each piece of information we get we are building upon our own heritage.

American Jewish University

The Frank Learning Center is located in The American Jewish University at 15600 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles 90077. Admission is free. The Learning Center is open Monday - Thursday 8 AM - 8 PM, Friday 8 AM - 2 PM and Sunday 1 - 5 PM. All research must be done onsite. Databases may not be removed from the library.

JGSCV Welcomes New Members MICHAEL and HELENE GOLLUB

Julian and Gregorian Calendars-- Happy 433 Birthday For The “Correction”

Those who research Eastern Europe are aware of the two calendars: Gregorian (solar calendar) and Julian (introduced by Julius Caesar http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Caesar in 46 BC) and the 10-12 day difference-and what we need to calculate for the birth, marriage and death dates in our ancestral records.

On 24 February 1582, 433 years ago, Pope Gregory XIII enlisting the expertise of astronomers and mathematicians issued an edict correcting the Julian calendar—it was a 0.002% correction in the length of the year. The motivation for changing the calendar was to bring the date for the celebration of Easter to the time of the year in which the First Council of Nicaea had agreed upon in 325.

At the time, there was a 10 day difference or “error”. The directive changed the “rule” on leap years. (Every year that is exactly divisible by four is a leap year, except for years that are exactly divisible by 100, but these centurial years are leap years if they are exactly divisible by 400. For example, the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 are not leap years, but is for the year 2000). The “ten day” issue was relative to the vernal equinox. The vernal equinox had moved backward in the calendar, so that in 1582 it occurred about 11 March, 10 days earlier than 21 March. The Gregorian calendar therefore began by skipping 10 calendar days, to restore

April, 2015

21 March as the date of the vernal equinox and bring the calendar back into synchronization with the seasons. The Julian calendar divided the year into 12 months of 365 days. An extra day was added every fourth year. This resulted in a year having on average 365 π days.

The new calendar, the Gregorian calendar, named for Pope Gregory, became effective 4 October 1582 in most Catholic countries; 1752 in Britain and the US colonies; 1918 in Russia and 1923 in Greece. Because the Catholic Church had no control over civil calendars and Protestant countries objected to a “Catholic” innovation, it took time to adopt. Today it is the most widely used calendar.

As different countries used different days to mark the beginning of the New Year, this can affect your genealogical research for dates on vital records. Depending on the country (and the region within some countries), the first day of the New Year could be 25 December (essentially the winter solstice), 1 January, 1 March, 24 or 25 March (essentially the spring equinox). Britain and the colonies prior to 1753 typically used either March 24th or March 25th as the beginning of the New Year. This roughly corresponded to the spring equinox. Thus, the beginning of the calendar year was essentially moved from close to the spring equinox to close to the winter solstice. Therefore, be



mindful of when looking for any ancestor born prior to 1753 whose date of birth falls between 1 January and 25 March. For example, if you are looking for an ancestor born in February 1752, the actual date today would be recorded as February 1753. If you are not aware of this difference, you may very well end up looking for a genealogy record in the wrong year!

Here is a US example about the first US president, George Washington, and differences between the calendars:

George Washington was born on 11 February 1731 in Westmoreland County, Virginia. At the time, America was an English colony, so it used the Julian calendar. In the Julian calendar, George Washington's birthday was 11 February 1731. However, in the Gregorian calendar, George Washington's birthday is 22 February 1732.

Not everyone adopted the Gregorian Calendar and there are other calendars, such as the Hebrew calendar, the Chinese Calendar and the Islamic Calendar. These three calendars share a common attribute: They are based on either the annual cycle of the sun, the phases of the moon, or a combination of the two. The division of the week into 7 days comes from the Jewish calendar - See more at: http://www.genealogyintime.com/GenealogyResources/Articles/understanding_julian_calendars_and_gregorian_calendars_in_genealogy_page1.html#sthash.5dMqvZpV.dpuf

For those of us researching the Russian Empire this is also very important to note:

Since the introduction of the Gregorian calendar, the difference between Gregorian and Julian calendar dates has increased by three days every four centuries (all date ranges are inclusive):

1. If the Julian date is between 5 October 1582 and 18 February 1700 add 10 days to get the Gregorian date
2. If the Julian date is between 19 February 1700 - 17 Feb 1800 add 11 days to get the Gregorian date
3. If the Julian date is between 18 February 1800- 16 Feb 1900 add 12 days to get the Gregorian date
4. If the Julian date is between 17 February 1900 - 31 Jan 1918 Julian, add 13 days to get the Gregorian date
5. From 1 February 1918 to the present, use the Gregorian calendar.

This is from Wikipedia. Other sources might have slightly different dates

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar)

Steve Morse has a calendar converter from Julian to Gregorian on his website:

<http://www.stevemorse.org/jcal/julian.html> .

Steve also has an excellent article on his website that is well worth reading:

<http://www.stevemorse.org/juliancalendar/julian.htm>

Thank you to Thomas MacEntee, GeneaBloggers, for advising us about this important 433 birthday.



Changes

At Temple Adat Elohim: For the past two years Temple Adat Elohim's rabbis have included "Interim Senior Rabbi" Barry Diamond and Rebecca Dubowe. Rabbi Dubowe, a strong supporter of JGSCV who has been with the temple for 18 years will be leaving the temple effective June 30th. The Adat Elohim has chosen Rabbi Andrew Straus, to be the new Senior Rabbi and the sole rabbi serving the Temple Adot Elohim community, beginning July 1st. We welcome Rabbi Straus and invite him to attend our meetings. And, we will miss Rabbi Dubowe. The temple will honor Rabbi Dubowe on June 7th which is also a JGSCV meeting date. We send our very best wishes to Rabbi Dubowe in her future endeavors. We will also miss Rabbi Diamond as he moves onto his next interim rabbi role. **(For this one time – June 7th - JGSCV will meet starting at 1:00PM.** There will be more reminders, of course: see next page.)

At www.jgscv.org: JGSCV's webmaster, David Oseas, surprised the Board by redesigning and updating the JGSCV website to the 21st century. The new look is clean and crisp and the website is extremely functional! See our new website at: www.jgscv.org



Not only can you use it and see it on your home computers, David constructed it so that you can use it and see it full screen on your smart phones, tablets and other mobile devices! David also added a search feature on the right side on the blue bar. You can search for any name or subject that would appear on the JGSCV website. For example, if you typed in "Poland" and click the magnifying glass to search, it will take 0.15 seconds and return 642 results. If you type "Jan Meisels

Allen" it will return 285 results in 0.24 seconds. Typing in "Temple Adat Elohim" returned 222 results in 0.27 seconds. The first item listed in that search is the Temple's link under "About JGSCV" where there is a Google map, directions and a link to their website. The speed may vary depending on your connection speed from your internet service provider. To get results you can type the search word or phrase with or without quote marks—you will receive the same results.

We all owe David a great big thank you for his excellent work on this wonderful surprise and enhancement to JGSCV's website.

At ProQuest: Many of the public libraries that are listed in the JGSCV Resources have ProQuest's Heritage Online. ProQuest changed their interface to a new one powered by Ancestry.com. This was announced by ProQuest earlier this month in a release which may be read at: <http://tinyurl.com/ps66759>

While some who are used to using the older version may be disappointed with the new process, it's a learning curve and there are enhancements as expressed in the aforementioned release. It has a new image Viewer which makes it easier to share images with family and friends. The new version of Heritage Quest is available to all subscribing libraries - check your local library to see if they are a subscriber. ProQuest has a long standing relationship with Ancestry.com and markets their product library editions. This is part of the expanded partnership and distribution agreement they announced in June 2014. ProQuest is also known to those who research historical newspapers and to libraries as well as for their on-going support of the IAJGS Conferences providing access to all of their historical newspapers for one long research day.

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates through August 2015

Sunday afternoons starting at 1:30 p.m. (1:00 p.m. on 6/7)

Programs co-sponsored by Temple Adat Elohim.

April 12, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM "Remembering the Holocaust Through Family History Using the Resources of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum" Megan Lewis, Research Librarian, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Looking at ways genealogists can use the resources at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum such as oral histories to find the details of their ancestor's lives that show the history on the human level. Ms. Lewis will demonstrate how to use the Museum's online resources to do research from home. Annual Yom Hashoah Program (actual Yom Hashoah is April 16)

May 3, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM You've Found Some Records Now What? Marion Werle Evaluating the information you have, reconciling discrepancies, what is a reliable source?

June 7, 2015 Sunday **1:00-3:00 PM (SPECIAL TIME)** DNA From A Users Perspective. JGSCV Member Mike Markowitz will talk about DNA testing- autosomal as well as mTDNA and Y-DNA from a Users perspective and what the test results mean.

July 2015 No Meeting- -IAJGS Conference Jerusalem July 6-10, 2015

August 2, 2015 Sunday Genealogy in the Round 1:30-3:30 PM Come and share a genealogical success, failure, brick wall, or genealogical artifact! This is YOUR meeting—We all learn from one another—take this opportunity to share your genealogical story—success or failure, ask questions about your brick walls, and more!

Programs are subject to change -check JGSCV website www.jgscv.org

