



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF THE CONEJO VALLEY AND VENTURA COUNTY (JGSCV)

Volume 4 Issue 10

July 2009

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Fifteen members and friends shared a story, success, brick wall or artifact at JGSCV's June 7 meeting—while others in the audience provided helpful suggestions for scaling the brick walls and sharing of ideas—a great meeting for interaction!

Thank you to the following participants: Hal Bookbinder (on how to break brick walls); Judith Cohen (discovery on city directories and a brick wall); Ellen Fleischmann (where to inquire in Germany for her grandfather's birth record); Jorge Gonzalez (his trip to Mexico—see Jorge's presentation on page 5); Barbara Hoff (where to look without overspending to help break down brick walls); Bobbie Japka (Sabbatharians and where to find an ancient handwritten bible); Carol Paskow (information on Alsace-Lorraine synagogues and other Judaic interest sites); Rabbi Shimon Paskow (sharing antiquarian Judaic books); Diane Wainwood (her trip to Kherson, Ukraine—ancestral shtetl); Carole Webber (finding paternal relatives when family was previously separated for many years); Stephen Weinstein (Julian and Hebrew calendars); Tammy Williams (success at finding great grandfather at Ellis Island and a brick wall looking for great grandparents). Judy Wolkovitch (obtaining 1930 English divorce papers advising about a family

member's previously unknown prior marriage and tracing the family through Facebook); Naidia Woolf (trying to find her great-grandfather's name); and Bob Zaas (success in finding his grandfather's immigration and original family name). See pages 2 and 4 for more photos of the presenters, and page 4 for research suggestions from the meeting.

Please see page 3 for meeting dates through June 2010. We are delighted that Temple Adat Elohim continues to invite us back and co-hosts our programs. They are a wonderful partner and we could not provide the programs without them.

The resources page on our website www.jgscv.org has been updated. This page not only has LA and Ventura County links for records, but it also includes a chart of over 90 domestic and international urls. Surely, some will pertain to your genealogy. Keeping this updated and functioning is due to the great technical skill and interest of our webmaster David Oseas. We hope you view the JGSCV website frequently for meeting announcements, resources, and other items. We all owe David a big thank you!

Don't forget to sign up for Ralph's Community Contribution Program. We receive a quarterly check for about \$90 and that is from only 8 people participating...this is great way for you to help your JGS, at no cost to you! Even if you are only an occasional shopper at Ralph's, it will help JGSCV! Information on how to sign up is on our website: www.jgscv.org and click on "notices".

Remember, for a great genealogical experience attend the IAJGS 29th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, August 2-7, 2009 in Philadelphia. For information see: www.philly2009.org

We look forward to seeing you at the July 12 meeting: "Facebook: The Ins and Outs of the On-Line Social Networking Utility to Find Relatives and Others". Michael Gallop will be presenting. Afterward, Debra Kay-Blatt and Helene Rosen, JGSCV board members will share their experiences with finding relatives on Facebook.

Jan Meisels Allen

Some June 7th Presenters



L-R from top:
Rabbi Paskow, Barbara Hoff, Tammy
Williams, Judy Wolkovitch, Hal Bookbinder

ABOUT JGSCV.....

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County 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. Members have access to the JGSCV library located on special shelves at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter which is circulated by email.

2009 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send appropriate amount in check made out to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountain wood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain new membership or renewal forms on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

*More Presenters from June 7th:
Successes and Roadblocks*

*L-R from the top: Naidia Woolf, Carole Webber,
Stephen Weinstein and Diane Wainwood*



The Ventura County Fair Needs Volunteers

The Ventura County Fair is August 5-16. For the past few years JGSCV participated along with the Conejo Valley Genealogical Society, the Ventura County Genealogical Society and the Ventura Family History Center, by volunteering at a booth during the Fair. Volunteers are needed every day of the fair; shifts are 4 hours: 10:30 AM- 2:30 PM; 2:30-6:30 PM and 6:30 -10 PM. While there is a \$10 parking fee for the general public, volunteers park free in the workers parking lot (with a free shuttle) for the day you volunteer. If you are interested in volunteering, please email

Jan Meisels Allen at president@JGSCV.org .

All seniors (62 years and older) and handicapped are free on Tuesday August 11.

CORRECTION:

Last month's issue had an incorrect listing for Dinaburg/Dvinski/Daugavpils records as discovered by Stephen Weinstein. He informs us that records are available for the years 1875, 1878, 1887, 1889-1895, 1898-99 and 1903 in addition to 1868-70 and 1872-74 as noted in the June newsletter.

He also points out that the 'Mois Month' dates in that index are for the Julian calendar. For it to be compatible with our Gregorian calendar the user should add 12 days to the date shown.

THANK YOU, Stephen.

Help the IAJGS by Purchasing From Amazon.com Through Their Website

There are always occasions where you need to buy a gift for someone or yourself, birthdays, anniversaries, graduation, just because, etc... IAJGS has joined the Amazon.com affiliates. By entering the Amazon.com portal from the IAJGS website, IAJGS benefits, and of course the same great prices for all their merchandise is the same. This is a great way to support IAJGS by shopping at Amazon.com. The IAJGS is the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, of which JGSCV is a proud member and through its umbrella policy, JGSCV has its 501-C-3 (not-for-profit) designation.

Amazon.com offers a selection of products, including books, movies, music, DVDs, games, magazines, software, computers, electronics, home and garden supplies, tools, toys, baby goods, pet supplies, clothing, shoes, food and more!

As a participant in the Amazon.com Affiliate Program, IAJGS benefits every time you shop online at Amazon.com if you enter Amazon.com through the icon on the IAJGS website www.IAJGS.org . Just scroll down on the home page to the Amazon.com icon and shop at Amazon.com as you would normally—entering through the IAJGS website doesn't increase the cost!



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

The JGSCV will hold a general meeting on Sunday, July 12, 2009 at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, 1:30-3:30 PM

"Facebook: The Ins and Outs of the On-Line Social Networking Way to Find Relatives and Others"

Michael Gallop has become expert in using social networking to find friends and relatives. Michael's expertise will take you to parts of Facebook you didn't know existed. If you don't already have your own page on Facebook, you will certainly want one by the end of this program. He will share his insights, suggestions and even some tricks for using the current digital phenomenon of social networking as another genealogical tool for finding your ancestors.

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV.

For more information contact information@JGSCV.org

See: www.JGSCV.org or call Jan Meisels Allen @ 818-889-6616

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates

All Meetings are held at Temple Adat Elohim
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

2009

Aug. 30

SPECIAL TIME: 2-4 PM: Fourth Anniversary Celebration "Jewish Given Names" by Warren Blatt, managing director of JewishGen.org AND the Klutzmer Band playing Eastern European music

Oct. 5

SPECIAL DAY and TIME
Monday 7-9 PM:

"Remembering the Victims"
Dan Brown, Holocaust instructor, author and Dean, Moorpark College

Nov 8

1:30 -3:30 PM Program TBD

Dec 6

1:30-3:30 PM
Steve Morse, "Hodge Podge of Lesser Known Gems" and Annual Chanukah Party

2010

Jan. 10 Sun. 1:30-3:30PM TBA

Feb. 1 Mon. 7-9PM TBA

March 7 Sun. 1:30-3:30PM TBA

April 11 Sun. 1:30-3:30PM TBA

June 6 Sun. 1:30-3:30PM TBA

RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS FROM JUNE 7TH MEETING

At the last meeting, attendees asked questions of the presenters for help in overcoming roadblocks. Below are some suggestions.

Hal Bookbinder: Steve Morse "tools" (www.stevemorse.org) will help if you have a first name and birth date to help find someone's current location and married name. This tool takes the user to www.privateeye.com (under Finding Birthdays and Relatives).

Judith Cohen commented on how helpful city directories were to her research when she visited the city in upstate NY where she grew up. [For a list of city directories to determine if a city directory exists for a locality, see: <http://www.uscitydirectories.com>] The list was added for this article.

Naidia Woolf: go to the Jewish Chronicle (www.jewishchronicle.com) for looking at Jewish British Newspapers. For looking at the 1911 England and Wales census go to FindMyPast.com – looking at the index is free, there is a charge for looking and downloading/printing the actual census page.

Jan Allen remarked that www.FindMyPast.com or its site <http://www.1911census.co.uk/> will be free on the resource room computers at the IAJGS Conference in Philadelphia (www.philly2009.org). For the Irish 1911 census go to: www.census.nationalarchives.ie which is being hosted by the National Archives and Library of Canada and it is free. Jan mentioned while the LARFHC is closed for 6 months the local, smaller, Family History Centers can order microfilms from Salt Lake City to be used in their centers-- (www.familysearch.org) will list the microfilm numbers.

Stephen Weinstein: said to go to www.italiangen.org for looking up New York City vital records or naturalization records. To order vital records from New York City go to the site for the Municipal Archives <http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/vitalrecords/home.shtml> or the NYC Department of Health <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/home/home.shtml> outside of New York City go to: http://www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/

SECOND SOURCE FOR AUSCHWITZ DEATHS

For a number of years, the museum at Auschwitz has had a searchable list of 69,000 Auschwitz deaths at <http://en.auschwitz.org.pl> Most of the records were destroyed by the Germans shortly before the Russian army occupied the camp. A posting on the JewishGen Discussion Group notes a second site with the information: <http://tinyurl.com/aol7zz>

The Auschwitz Museum site has a conventional search engine that is used to locate a person. The alternate site downloads all the records by initial letter of the surname. The second site allows the researcher to locate a person with alternate spellings (or misspellings). The site is much slower since *all* the records for the requested letter must be downloaded before using.

More Presenters from June 7th: Successes and Roadblocks



Carol Paskow



Ellen Fleischmann



Boie Japka



Bob Zaas

“Jews in Mexico” is how Jorge Gonzales titles his story of finding and connecting with two “lantsmen” <sic> in Mexico. Jorge presented his story at the June 7th “Successes and Roadblocks” meeting. It should be an inspiration for all.



My wife and I went to Mexico for our annual “Mexican vacation”. On February 13, 2009, we loaded our pick-up, and packed some snacks for our adventure. We traveled to Tequila, Jalisco (about 34 hours driving). Besides the beautiful scenery, buildings, archeological sites and awesome food, I was determined (my wife calls it obsessed) to find out if there were any descendants of the Jews in the smaller towns of Mexico. In Mexico City there are around 15,000 Jews but they are from Ashkenazi roots, and the same in Guadalajara.

For the first nine days, I came up empty handed. But on February 23, after traveling to several small towns and cities, we arrived in the beautiful city of Uruapan, Michoacan. As we were checking into the hotel, my wife said to me “look at the ceiling, there are your Jewish stars”. I looked up and saw two beautiful Stars of David in the center of the chandeliers. I asked the hotel front desk if by any chance the owner was Jewish, she said: No, he is Catholic”. Later I asked the valet the same question and he said: “He is not Jewish, he is Mexican”. After more questions he described the owner as a Hassidic Rabbi.

Early that evening we met a gentleman whose features were similar to those of the hotel owner. I greeted him with, “Shalom, mash lom ha?” He just looked at me and waved. At this point I was happy because I thought that I had run into a fellow Jew.

At about 9PM I noticed a man selling paintings. He approached me and said, “This is going to sound weird, please don’t think that I am crazy, but by any chance are you of Jewish descent?” I asked him why. He said, “I just feel a calling of the Blood!” I asked, “What do you mean?” He said, “My grandparents were Jewish. They kept Shabbats, prayed Siddur, lit candles on Shabbats and wore Tallit. So, if they were Jewish, I guess that it makes me Jewish also, ah?” At this point I didn’t tell him that I am Jewish but asked him about his grandparents. He told me that they could trace their roots prior to the Inquisition, and they sought refuge in smaller towns for fear of being persecuted. They moved from town to town, and even changed their last names. They ended up in a town called Cotija, Michoacan. His parents moved to the town of Uruapan, and his mother, not knowing much about Judaism, raised them Catholic. He said that he wants to return to Judaism, but in this town the closest that he can get is messianic Judaism. I told him that yes I was Jewish, and I showed him my Star of David necklace. He became very happy, and asked me questions about Judaism, which I promptly answered. He asked me if I wore a kippa, and I told him yes. I showed him my kippa that I carried on my pocket, and he got so excited. I told him that I had an extra in my pick-up, and would be more than happy to give it to him tomorrow.

The next day, as we were eating breakfast the other man (the one that fit the description of the owner) showed up. I asked him if he was the owner, and if he was Jewish. He said he was not the owner, and he was not Jewish – just another traveler. He said that the day before when I said, “Shalom, mash lom ja?”, somehow he knew that I was greeting him. He told me that he had been asked before if he was Jewish, but always replied that he is Mexican. Just out of curiosity I asked him if he knew his ancestry, and he said that yes his grandparents were from Italy.

As we were leaving the hotel, my friend Miguel showed up, and I gave him the promised kippa. Immediately he put it on and tears fell down his cheeks. He was so happy to be wearing something really Jewish. I asked my wife to snap a picture. As we were saying good bye, the man I encountered in the restaurant earlier was leaving also. In my heart I knew that somehow three Mexican Jews had crossed paths, on that day.

Driving back to my parents’ town I noticed the sign posted on the back of the very slow trailer I was following. The very clear Hebrew letters read “ISRAEL”, made in Guadalajara, Jalisco. Automatically, overwhelmed I said, “Shema Israel Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echod, Baruch shem k vod malchto l’olam va ed.”

Shalom

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