



JGSCV

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

December, 2012

Volume 8 Issue 3

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

JGSCV members who attended the November 5th program were treated to an exceptional experience when Genie Milgrom (photo right) spoke on *From the Spanish Inquisition to the Present: A Search for Jewish Roots*. Genie's passion for family history knows no bounds. Her story starts pre Inquisition when – unbeknownst to her- the family was Jewish. The Inquisition forced them to become Crypto Jews and for generations lived as Catholics. Genie's strong sense of Jewishness caused her to convert to Judaism. Her search to understand her roots brought her full circle as she learned she was in fact, born Jewish. Her story is one of perseverance, emotion and researching back to the 1400's to prove her heritage to the Israeli rabbinate as her goal was to be recognized as a born Jew not only one that converted. Genie's recently published book *My Fifteen Grandmothers* was available for purchase and JGSCV has added it to our traveling library. By the way, she has since been able to research back to her 19th grandmother – all from the small town of Feroselle in Spain on the Portuguese border. A short summary of the program is on page 13.

The meeting remembered *Kristallnacht*, [November 9-10] the night of broken



Genie Milgrom at the November 5th Meeting

NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, Dec. 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM

Getting the Most Out of Ancestry.com

Crista Cowan will share her tips, tricks and insights for easier access to family records on one of most recognized genealogy sites in the world.

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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glass, which some believe was the beginning of the holocaust. We also thanked those who served in the military, in celebration of Veteran's Day. The five-minute genealogical hint was on US military records.

Allan Linderman, Nominations Committee member, gave the recommendations for the four open board positions. With no additional nominees from the floor, nominations were closed and the Committee's recommendations will stand for election by acclimation at our December 2 meeting. See page 6 for candidate biographies. Others serving on the Nominations Committee were Hal Bookbinder, Chairman and Karen Lewy, general membership representative.

The JGSCV board is currently in final negotiations with the County of Los Angeles Public Library to house the majority of our traveling library at the Agoura Hills Public Library branch beginning early in 2013. This is where our permanent library is currently housed. This permits our members and friends to have greater access to this excellent genealogical library. JGSCV retains full ownership of our collection and it **remains non-circulating—no one may take any of the books, journals or maps out of the library.** A small part of the collection will be retained as a traveling library, for access 30 minutes prior to each meeting. For more information, please see page 7.

Our 2013 membership renewal drive is well on its way with 32 percent of the members already renewing their membership! A renewal/new membership form is on page 15. Your dues pay for our library, speaker travel costs, honorariums, and more . . . We need your dues to continue providing outstanding programs and services! As in past years, those who join or renew between October and our December 2 meeting **and** attend our December 2 meeting are eligible to have their name drawn for great genealogical gifts donated by Ancestry.com, Find My Past, Fold3 Family Tree Magazine, Legacy Family Tree, Roots Magic and more!

Our December 2 program is the return of the *Barefoot Genealogist* Crista Cowan, of Ancestry.com who will speak about "Getting the Most out of Ancestry.com". Crista will share what's new on Ancestry.com and show how to access key record collections to find your Jewish and other European family history research. She'll also share some of her favorite search tips and tricks.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors, have a Happy Chanukah. We are looking forward to seeing you at the December 2nd meeting—remember we return to Sundays starting at 1:30 PM- but come 30 minutes early for the traveling library. The schmoozing corner begins 20 minutes before the meeting.

Jan Meisels Allen



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.

2013 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send a check in the appropriate amount to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain the new/renewal membership form on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

SUB-CARPATHIA UPDATES

JewishGen's Sub-Carpathia SIG announced the following updates: Ancestral Villages, Archival Records, Synagogues, Cemeteries. The website is <http://tinyurl.com/c2mmey4>

1900, 1910 KRAKOW CENSUSES ONLINE

All of the 1910 census and part of the 1900 census are now available for Krakow. Handwritten name indices have been digitized by the Malopolska Digital Library and Polish State Archive in Krakow. For how to use the indices:

<http://tinyurl.com/d5ughn5>

For 1900: <http://tinyurl.com/ch2rgzh>

For 1910: <http://tinyurl.com/cfrvxcc>

THE STORY OF IRANIAN JEWS AT UCLA

The Fowler Museum's Lucas Gallery is showcasing the story of Iranian Jews and the Judeo-Persian traditions with an exhibit that will run through March 10, 2013. Artifacts of the 20th century are included in the Goldenberg Galleria. The exhibit concludes with insights of the Iranian-Jewish community in Los Angeles. Learn more at: <http://tinyurl.com/8pvbjon>

DOWNLOAD FAMILYSEARCH.ORG IMAGES

Fast Film (<http://tinyurl.com/cqauuxy>) offers a free program that allows users to download digitized microfilm images from FamilySearch.org. The program is available for Windows, Mac and Linux systems but requires Java to run. Simple instructions to detect Java and download if necessary is on the website.

ITS RELEASES 224,000 FILES

The International Tracing Service has released 224,000 additional records to its partner organizations around the world. These files contain correspondences among survivors and family members victimized by the Nazi's. Organizations receiving the data are Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw, Luxembourg Documentation and Research Centre on the Resistance, Belgium State Archives, French State Archives and the Wiener Library in London. Documents are also available at the ITS in Bad Arolsen, Germany. The International Tracing Service website is <http://tinyurl.com/dy6653b>



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, December 2, 2012 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Temple Adat Elohim, 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

The Program: *Getting The Most Out of Ancestry.com*

Do you have an Ancestry.com subscription (or are thinking about getting one) but suspect that you are only using a fraction of what can be done with the powerful tools and resources available on this website? Spend an afternoon with Crista Cowan, The Barefoot Genealogist, as she shares what's new on Ancestry.com. She'll show you how to access key record collections to assist with your Jewish and other European family history research. She'll also share some of her favorite search tips and site tricks. Join us to learn more about unleashing the full potential of Ancestry.com on your family history.



Even if you are an Ancestry.com user you are sure to learn something new!

Speaker: Crista Cowan, Community Alliance Manager Ancestry.com. "The Barefoot Genealogist" has been employed at Ancestry.com since 2004. Crista has been involved with family history research for over 20 years and is the owner of Legacy Family History Services, specializing in descendency research, Jewish immigration, and sharing family history with the genealogically challenged.

Everyone is eligible for the drawing of fantastic genealogical prizes for those who renew their JGSCV membership or join for 2013. You must be present to win! Light refreshments will be served celebrating Chanukah and our membership drive.

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 interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV.

Traveling Library categories A and D will be at the next meeting. Please check the website for the books included in each category (<http://jgscv.org>). To request a book that is not in either category, please email Jan Meisels Allen at least 5 days in advance of the meeting at president@jgscv.org.



THE SCHMOOZING CORNER is now open 20 minutes before each meeting. A knowledgeable JGSCV member will be available to answer questions, offer direction and maybe even a solution to a brick wall or two. Hal Bookbinder will facilitate the Schmoozing Corner on Dec. 2nd



Ralphs requires everyone to reregister for their community contribution program. If you have a Ralphs card and are not yet signed up, please do so and include JGSCV as your 'community'. Your groceries cost the same but Ralphs will send JGSCV a contribution. Last year only one in 10 JGSCV members were part of this program. Let's make that 10 of 10 next year! Contact Karen Lewy with questions: karen@jgscv.org.

Remember this month's meeting includes a special Chanukah celebration with genealogical gifts and prizes from ancestry.com and more!

Congratulations to last month's JGSCV speaker Genie Milgrom on being awarded the Florida State Genealogical Society's Genealogy Outstanding Achievement Award primarily based upon the research presented at last month's meeting.

You can also help JGSCV when you shop at Amazon.com by simply entering the Amazon site from JGSCV's **home page**. Start at www.jgscv.org and scroll to the bottom to click on the Amazon graphic (like the one below). This will take you to the same page you always start at – except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee at no cost to you.



We mourn the passing of JGSCV member David Stelman on November 12th. David was a member since 2006 and helped as a videographer at the time JGSCV created 'how-to' videos. Our condolences to the family.

BIOGRAPHIES OF BOARD OF DIRECTOR NOMINEES

Debra Kay-Blatt

Debra Kay-Blatt is the Secretary and a founding member of JGSCV. She has been searching her roots for over ten years. In addition to giving presentations at annual IAJGS conferences over the last five years on JewishGen and Polish research, she has been a volunteer for JewishGen, JRI-Poland, and a contributor to the Kielce-Radom Special Interest Group Journal.

Karen Lewy

Karen Lewy serves on the JGSCV Publicity Committee and as the Ralphs Community Contribution coordinator. After a career of global project management in banking, in 2011 Karen moved from Baltimore to LA to be closer to her adult children. Her banking background will serve her well in a fiduciary role on the JGSCV board. Karen started doing genealogical research for her ancestors in 2010. She is actively researching family from Germany, Lithuania, and Poland. Karen joined JGSCV in October 2011. After attending one of her first JGSCV meetings and learning more about obtaining records from Poland, she was successful in accessing microfilm from LDS, ordering records from Poland and using *Viewmate* on Jewish Gen for translation help.

Helene Rosen

Helene Rosen is the Membership Vice President and a founding member of the JGSCV and was an active participant during the JGSCV cemetery project. Helene wrote articles for JGSCV's *Venturing Into Our Past* on finding a relative in Australia and using Steve Morse's site to find her grandmother's steamship record. On several occasions, she has presented her research findings during JGSCV's *Genealogy in the Round* meetings. Her family tree contains over 1250 names. She is a graduate of UCLA, has worked for the County of Los Angeles in data processing, and is the mother of three fine young men.

Marion Werle

Marion Werle is the JGSCV Publicity Chairperson and has been researching family from Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus for over fifteen years. She has served on the board of JGSLA and is a past president of the Latvia SIG. She has written articles for *Avotaynu* and *RootsKey*, and published a review of her research on her Latvian family in the *FEFHHS Journal*. Marion is currently focusing on her family's history in Canada after leaving the Old Country, and is also busy adding source citations her past research. Her professional background is in IT, although her degrees in European history and library science have been helpful in enhancing her genealogical research skills. She has been a member of JGSCV since July 2009.

JGSCV Library News!



JGSCV is fortunate to have an extensive library collection in our traveling library—over 270 books—but it is only accessible for 30 minutes before each meeting—and then only half of the collection is available at each meeting. The issue of greater access has been one that the JGSCV board of directors has been grappling with for a long time—and we know our members have wanted greater access.

We are delighted to announce that we are in final discussions with the County of Los Angeles Public Library to house the majority of the traveling library along with our current permanent library at the Agoura Hills Public Library branch of the County of Los Angeles Public Library. This permits greater access since the library branch is open five days a week (Tuesday-Saturday) including two evenings. There are copy machines and computers available at the Agoura Hills Library to aide with your research. The Agoura Hills Library branch is also the designated branch of the 88-branch LA County Public Library system for their Holocaust Collection and Hebrew language books. By adding the JGSCV collection to this branch, it is truly a great Jewish and genealogical research center!

We are in contract negotiations as this article is being written. The essentials agreed upon include:

1. The ownership of the books, journals, newsletters and maps is retained by the JGSCV.
2. Anyone may use the library collection.
3. The collection will be considered a reference collection --100% non-circulating-including for JGSCV members-that **means no one may check out any of the materials in the collection.**
4. The books of the collection will be catalogued in the County of Los Angeles Public Library on-line catalogue in addition to the list being maintained on the JGSCV website.
5. Either party can cancel the contract with due notice.

About 50 books will be retained in our traveling library and not housed at the Agoura Hills Public Library. The JGSCV board of directors is making the decision as to which books will remain in the traveling library. As is currently, the privilege of membership to use the traveling library at the president's home by appointment will continue for those books remaining in the traveling library. While the County Librarian and the JGSCV Board continue with finalizing the details of the contract, the traveling library will continue to be brought to our meetings. Once the contract is finalized, it will take several months for the cataloguing and other administrative details before the library collection is available at the Agoura Hills Library. You will be advised when the transfer occurs.

JGSCV WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS:

EVELYN HOWARD

NANCY NEWELL

DENISE QUIGLEY

THE HOLOCAUST IN STANISLAW'OW

By William Tannenzapf

This article was originally published in *Jidisze Cajtung* ("Jewish Newspaper") Number 13 (81) on the fourth anniversary of the Stanisławów ghetto liquidation, February 1947. The author translated his own Yiddish article into English in 1996. It is reprinted with permission from *The Galitzianer*, Volume 19, Number 3, September, 2012.

Stanisławów was a city with 37,000 Jews, a Jewish city with a highly developed cultural life. Who in east Galicia has not heard of the Stanisławów Jewish theater Goldfaden, with its symphony orchestra? Who does not know about the book *Mechajej Hakaraim* ("From the Lives of the Karaites") by Rubin Fan, the Stanisławów writer?

Jewish merchants, tradesmen, doctors, engineers, teachers, manufacturers— all played dominant roles in the city. There was once even a Jewish mayor and always a Jewish deputy mayor. Life pulsed in the dozens of Jewish national organizations, in the Jewish high school, in the Jewish workshops and factories, and in ten synagogues.

And now? Destroyed; gone is the magnificent Jewish community of Stanisławów, except for a few hundred who returned from Russia, and a few dozen (among them the author of these sorrows) who miraculously survived the ghetto days. This is the balance left of 37,000 Jews.

May G-d remember their souls. On 2 July 1941, the Madziare (Hungarians) marched into Stanisławów, following the retreat of the Russians. A month later, they were replaced by German military units. The Gestapo came to Stanisławów on 4 August and on the very same

day managed to set up the Judenrat. They also issued orders that on the 6th at specified hours all Jewish lawyers, doctors, teachers,¹ pharmacists, engineers, and the city rabbi with the judges of his religious court and with the ritual butchers must come to the former courthouse building, then occupied by the Gestapo.

More than 1,000 intellectuals, cultural leaders of the Stanisławów Jewish community, obeyed the order, albeit with mixed feelings. But not a single one was able at that time to assess the extent of the sadism in the Hitlerite beast, and therefore they, the most intelligent and best educated, became the first victims. Laid out like cords of lumber in trucks, covered with tarpaulins, the Ukrainian police stabbed their naked bodies with the bayonets of their rifles on their transport to the extermination place (Vernichtungsort). In a small wood outside of the city, they were shot, humiliated, tortured.

Then began the darkest days for the Stanisławów Jewish population, which by then included only a very few remaining professionals. Every day claimed more victims, killed either individually or in small groups, but only on 11 October 1941 did Krueger, the Gestapo chief (jimach-szmo ["may his name be extinguished"]), activate a kind of sadistic devilish strategy for the first mass Aktion² in Stanisławów. Armed Germans and Ukrainians together dragged out from their homes in the city all the Jews, including the sick, even undressed, and collected them in the town hall. From there they herded them to the New Jewish Cemetery. They ordered each sick Jew to be grabbed by the hands and feet by four healthy ones and carried. At two freshly dug

long pits, the murderers were shooting their Jewish victims individually while they were drinking whiskey and snapping pictures. Tragic scenes followed one another while the executions proceeded the whole day. It happened that the Gestapo chief recognized Dr. Tanenbaum (from the Judenrat) and wanted to send him home. The latter, however, replied, "From such murderous hands I am not taking my life back. I prefer to die with my brothers." In this Aktion more than 12,000 Jews died.

After this Aktion, the OD (Ordnungs-Dienst: Jewish ghetto police) was organized and the ghetto was created. In December 1941, the ghetto was eventually completely sealed up with a 2-meter-high plank fence. Next the sadistic Gestapo murderers Krueger and Brand classified all ghetto inhabitants into categories A, B, and C. Jews in the C category were imprisoned³ in the Rote Muehle (Red Mill; Ed. note: It was also known as Rudolfs Muehle after the Jewish owner who left it unfinished before the Nazi invasion), where the Gestapo had earlier imprisoned the Jews whom they had captured in the provincial shtetlach. Squeezed together, without water, their elementary human dignity abused, some of them died from hunger, others from typhus.

In March 1942, the afternoon of erev Pesach, the Germans, Ukrainians, and OD began to catch Jews in the streets of the ghetto. They were herded together with the remaining Jews alive from the Rote Muehle and were driven in an atrocious death march over the main streets of the city to the railway station, where they were einwagoniert ("pressed into cattle cars") using by now familiar methods. The transport with these several thousand Jews was dispatched to the Belzec extermination camp. Then continued for a certain interval a chapter

of the Rote Muehle. The old, the sick, the homeless, orphaned children, Jews from the province, and those in the B category all were systematically imprisoned³ in the Rote Muehle. Every few days they were driven—starved, tortured, humiliated, living corpses—to the railway station, loaded into cattle cars, and dispatched to Belzec.

On Shavuot 1942, it happened that a Jew was supposed to be taken by a Ukrainian policeman to the Schutzpolizei [police guard] headquarters. Seeing certain death before his eyes, the Jew poured gasoline on his angel of death, the Ukrainian, and set him on fire. The policeman was only wounded, but the Schutzpolizei carried out a "revenge Aktion." Ten Jewish OD's were hung, two per lamppost. Three thousand Jews were dragged out from their homes and hiding places⁴ and heinously shot and killed, and then buried in the very center of the ghetto. The Judenrat president, Goldsztain, a heavy-set man, was hung, tore off the rope twice, and was finally shot. The leaders of this Aktion were Captain Strege and Lieutenant Grim (Schupo), both from Vienna. For three days, Aryans received tickets for entry into the ghetto to view the hanged on display.

It was forbidden to bring any produce into the ghetto. People died from hunger like flies. The pull carts full of corpses were a daily sight.

Several German enterprises— H.K.P. [carpools], H.U.V. [international humanitarian groups], Reichsbahn [German railway], Rohstoffeffassung [raw materials processors], Schneiderei [textile] and Strikerei [knitwear] factories, These companies were located outside of the ghetto, and since it was more likely to get a piece of bread there, Jews went outside to work. In military-style formations, every day Jews who went to work left the ghetto in groups and later returned, through

the “lock”, a gate at which they were subjected to monstrous incidents of chicanery by the German, Ukrainian, and Jewish police.

On Rosh Hashanah 1942 in the morning, the groups at the “lock” were surrounded by Germans⁵. Simultaneously, a wild hunt for Jews began in the ghetto, which lasted three days. Those captured and surrounded were loaded into cattle cars and transported, most likely to Belzec. The cost of this Aktion was about 10,000 lives. Some groups managed to save themselves, but the Gestapo and Schupo (Schutzpolizei) captured them later in a few weeks’ time at their workstations and sent them in cattle cars also.

But the Stanisławów ghetto youth by now understood where the transports were going. While the cars were in motion, they jumped out and returned to the ghetto. So the Germans stopped sending Jews in cattle cars. Instead they started to exterminate Jews inside the ghetto proper. The victims were lined up in groups, forced to hold each other under the arms, and driven to the extermination place. Every few days executions were carried out in our New Jewish Cemetery on Stanisławów Jews and Jews from the province. One Aktion followed another, one by day, another by night, each at a different time, in a different way, with a strategy, a system, a German precision. The ghetto was systematically reduced in size. At the beginning of 1943, a permanent situation was created there, a sort of race with death⁶. Jewish blood was running at the “lock” and in the streets of the ghetto.

In February 1943, Jews working for Reichsbahn, H.K.P., and Rohstofffassung were confined into labor camps (kaserniert) outside of the ghetto, which was then compressed into a small area with very few buildings. More than twenty families (more correctly, remnants of December 2012

families) had to crowd together in one room, without food, without hope, without the barest sanitary conditions. These unlucky ghetto remnants became the victims of bloody terror, humiliation, and ridicule by the German and Jewish police. Amid piles of garbage, feathers and ripped bedding, amid piles of broken furniture and dishes, moved people—living cadavers—with a chasm of despair in their eyes and the terrible question on their lips: “Are they still digging?”⁷ They were referring to the special Jewish work force ordered to dig 4 m long by 4 wide by 4 m deep graves in the frozen ground of the New Jewish Cemetery.

On 21 February 1943 at dawn, Germans and Ukrainians armed with hand- and machineguns surrounded the ghetto. The empowered Gestapo head for Stanisławów Jews, Schot (jimach-szmo), entered the ghetto, leading a drunken military rabble, and personally shot the then president of the Judenrat, Schonfield. This was the signal for the final liquidation of the Stanisławów ghetto. The brutal Gestapo showed itself in its full sadistic bestiality. Drunk with alcohol, hatred, and blood, they sought to inflict the greatest pain on their victims. Splitting heads from shoulders, chopping live bodies with axes and rifle butts, tearing victims apart with horses, they forced those still alive to completely undress and to lay themselves down alive in layers in open graves. Some they shot and some they covered with earth, burying them alive. Only a very few Jews were able to escape through canals. Even some of those were caught and killed.

On 22 February 1943 placards were posted on the streets of Stanisławów in which the German Authority informed the population that Stanislawów had become Judenrein: clear of Jews.

Epilog

My family's victims in the listed Aktions:

1. My sister Nitka's husband, Nusko Feld; and my sister-in-law Mańka (Amalia) Treibetz.
2. My uncle Fishel's wife, Salcia Tannenzapf; and my cousin Tulo Wuhl's family.
3. My wife's brother, Jumko (Benjamin) Mandel, and his wife and children.
4. Uncle Fishel Tannenzapf.
5. My mother, Gisela Tannenzapf, was working there and then was wagoniert.
6. My sister, Nitka (Johanna) Feld, and her son Milek.
7. My cousins Munio and Dolek Tannenzapf, Uncle Fishel's children.

My father-in-law, Leb Mandel, died in the ghetto, but he was not killed. I don't know

when my uncle Moyshe Karliner and his family or my aunt Lea Shapira and her family were killed. Other family members who were killed: my oldest sister, Klara, her husband, Zygmunt Billig, and their two children, in Luck, Poland; my second oldest sister, Schancia (Jeanette), and her husband, Jonas Karliner, in Drohobycz, Poland; Uncle Wolf Karliner, his wife, and three children in Auschwitz; my sister-in-law Genya (Evgenia) Holder and two children in Otnia, Poland; and my sister-in-law Frydzia (Frederika) Kaswiner, in Pozniki, Poland.

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HELP WANTED

JGSCV has two open positions available. You can help your JGS immensely by volunteering to help with *Publicity* or the *Library*.

The member in charge of **Publicity** will email you JGSCV's meeting notices to local media outlets and other interested parties. The meeting notice is prepared in advance for you and is ready to be sent (no additional writing required), AND the list of recipients is also provided. In the past, this has required only 1-2 hours per month-but must be sent out the first week of each month. You must be able to receive and send documents in Word and PDF.

The **Librarian** is asked to print outside electronic journals and newsletters (provided) and file them into binders at the Agoura Hills Library. JGSCV pays for the printer ink and paper. The Librarian is called upon for these duties 2-4 times per month. You must be able to receive Word and PDF files and print in color as well as black and white.

Both tasks are vital, behind the scenes functions that help make your JGS a strong, vibrant organization. Please contact Jan Meisels Allen to offer your help: president@jgscv.org

2012 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Sunday, Dec. 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM *“Getting The Most Out Of Ancestry.com”* – Crista

Cowan, ‘The Barefoot Genealogist’
Ancestry.com

2013 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Sunday, Jan. 6th 1:30-3:30 PM *“Jewish Genetic Disorders Across the Diaspora”* Gary Frohlich, Genzyme and Catherine Quindipan, Cedars Sinai Medical Center

Sunday, Feb. 10th 1-5 PM *“Annual Assisted Research Afternoon”* – LA Family History Library

Sunday, March 3rd 1:30-3:30 PM *“Researching Your Canadian Family”* – Marion Werle

Sunday, April 7th 1:30-3:30 PM Yom Hashoah Day *“Holocaust Survivors and March of the Living”*, JGSCV Members

Sunday, May 5th 1:30-3:30 PM *“Obscure Records of Citizenship and Nationality”*, Marion Smith, USCIS

Sunday, June 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM *“Lodz, The Manchester of Poland”*, Debra Kay Blatt

Sunday, July 14th 1:30-3:30 PM *“Genealogy In The Round”*

JGSCV MEMBER BENEFITS

- Annual assisted research afternoon at the Family History Library
- Members-only emails from the president announcing special events and free opportunities with Ancestry and other genealogical organizations and other items of genealogical interest
- Use of the traveling library at president’s home – with an advance appointment
- For the first year of membership, JewishGen’s Warren Blatt will assist with one concise question per month. He won’t do your genealogy but with well thought out questions, he can help you on your genealogical journey.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM *The Spanish Inquisition to the Present: A Search for Jewish Roots*

Genie Milgrom, President, JGS of Greater Miami spoke on, *From the Spanish Inquisition to the Present: A Search for Jewish Roots* and treated JGSCV to an inspiring, educational and fascinating genealogical journey. Genie related that she always “felt inside that she was Jewish”, even though she was raised Catholic—at age 28 converted to Orthodox Judaism enduring a lot of family turmoil. Her two children were not permitted to be converted by her former husband, even though



they were now being raised in a Kosher home—they were taken by their father to Church every Sunday. Genie had to tell her mother and siblings that she could no longer eat in their

homes-but they finally accepted who she is. Her grandmother told her conversion was dangerous—not for the soul—but for being a Jew.

When her grandmother died—and family tradition was to bury shortly after death—Genie’s mother gave her a box from her grandmother, which contained a ‘hamsa’—the hand of G-d and a Star of David—attesting to Genie’s “belief” that they were once Jewish. The family also had certain customs, which turned out to be Sephardic traits.

Genie’s quest was to have her Ketubah (Jewish marriage contract) changed from stating she was a converted Jew to being born Jewish—and that required research to document her unbroken maternal line of Judaism to prove to the Israeli rabbis who could legally approve the change in the

Ketubah. When she visited with the Israeli rabbis, she was told she needed the Inquisition records to prove she was born a Jew. She hired a Spanish genealogist (Catholic priest) to review the Inquisition papers for her family’s



ancestral town of Fermoselle, Spain—but they only found two names. She visited the town of Fermoselle—and found symbols in Hebrew lettering—but no Jews or family were left.

Recognizing that Fermoselle was on the border of Portugal they then researched the Portuguese Inquisition records and found the family names.

Arthur BenVeniste addressing audience



This was revolutionary, as no one had previously gone through the Inquisition records to prove being born a Jew.

Genie went back to Fermoselle—this time she was shown a previous synagogue underground. By finding, the name they used—Bollicos/Bagikes (Ladino/Sephardic) the people recognized the family. Recently, Genie returned to Fermoselle. The town’s mayor proclaimed to be making an Official Act and handed her the Symbolic Key to the Jewish

Quarter of the village along with a Pergamino (a formal parchment used for writing) to serve as a Document of Historical Memory being given to a descendent of the Jews that had lived in this town of Fermoselle. In history, this is only the second time that a Mayor in Spain has given a Symbolic Key to a descendent of the Spanish Jews.

Genie achieved her goal as the Israeli rabbinical court has sent her a letter stating that she was born Jewish. While the Ketubah itself was not changed, the letter she received is clear in that she is not a convert but a born Jew.

JGSCV was most fortunate that Arthur BenVeniste (who spoke to JGSCV earlier this year about the holocaust in the Balkans and North Africa for Yom Hashoah Day) attended and participated in the question and answer period. The Inquisition was another holocaust, with an estimated 30,000 Jews who were killed in the Spanish Inquisition—and the rest confined to basements where they prayed. As Genie reminded us, 1391—over 100 years before the Inquisition—formed a turning point in



the history of the Spanish Jews. The persecution in the form of a pogrom— was the immediate forerunner of the Inquisition in Spain and when most Jews who converted to Catholicism and did so on their own.

Genie showed photos of the town and showed that at 2PM, certain graphics on



stones would show—but not at other times — due to the way, the sun would hit the stones. She was told that Crypto Jews would carve the stones so that during the 2 PM sun , the carvings would be visible. Genie has found an exact match cousin in Brazil through doing a DNA test—with the common ancestor being the 14th grandmother—that cousin has always been Jewish.

Genie was awarded the Florida State Genealogical Society Genealogy Outstanding Achievement Award on November 9th for her research. The research is the basis for her book, *My Fifteen Grandmothers*, which is in the JGSCV traveling library Sephardic category (Category C).

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