

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



JGSCV

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

December 2014

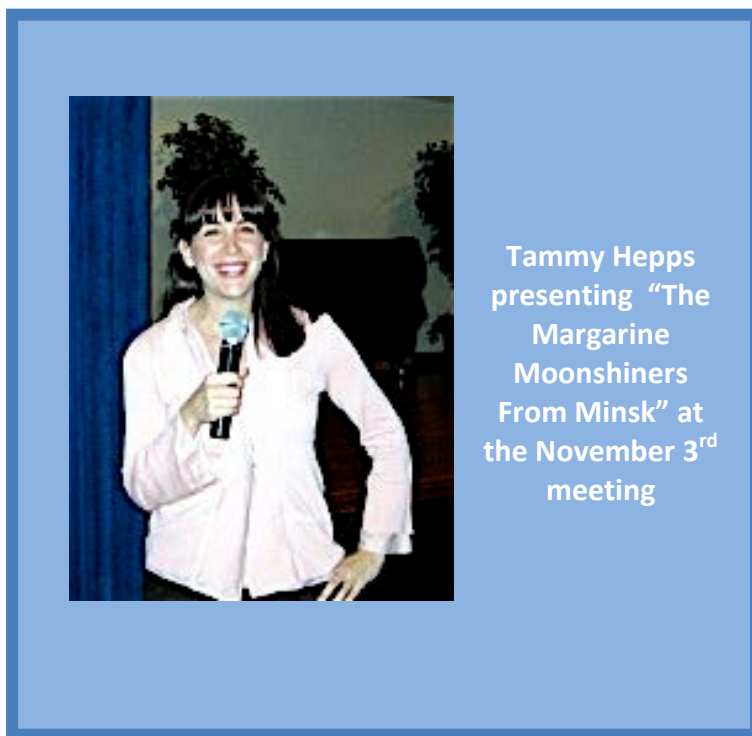
Volume 10 Issue 3

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Over 50 JGSCV members and friends were delighted with the funny and educational program put on by Tammy Hepps as she described her ancestors' antics in *The Margarine Moonshiners from Minsk: Conducting Story-Driven Research*. Tammy's storytelling techniques are a way to make all the research tidbits "come to life" with an entertaining yet genealogically educational methodology. Several of Tammy's cousins attended the program—grandsons of two of the infamous great grandfather's brothers-in-law—including the president of Moorpark Community College and Sandy Malek another cousin who is also president of JGSLA. For highlights on the program see page 6.

Thank you to Werner Frank and Debra Kay Blatt for facilitating the schmoozing corner. The 5-minute genealogical hint was on the International Jewish Genealogy Month which is celebrated during the month of Cheshvan -this year October 25-November 22.

Our December meeting is also our annual board election. There is a slate of five persons being brought by the Nominations Committee to the membership for a vote. For continuity, we elect half the board every other year with board members serving terms of two years. During the November meeting, JGSCV Board Member and 2014 Nominations Committee member, Issie Perel read the report and asked for nominations



Tammy Hepps presenting "The Margarine Moonshiners From Minsk" at the November 3rd meeting

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, December 21st 1:30-3:30 PM

Smart Searching on Ancestry.com & Annual Chanukah Party with Prizes

Crista Cowan, Ancestry's 'Barefoot Genealogist', with lots of secrets for easier and faster searches. And, JGSCV's Chanukah Party with Prizes for members

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

6052 Hackers Lane
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

818-889-6616

Jan Meisels Allen, President
president@jgscv.org

Stewart Bernstein, Member
at Large stewart@jgscv.org

Debra Kay Blatt, Secretary
secretary@jgscv.org

Warren Blatt, Member
Education
education@jgscv.org

Dorothy Drilich, Member at
Large Dorothy@jgscv.org

Allan Linderman, Newsletter
Editor
newslettereditor@jgscv.org

Helene Rosen, VP
Membership
membership@jgscv.org

Karen Lewy, Treasurer
treasurer@jgscv.org

Israel Perel, Librarian
librarian@jgscv.org

Jan Meisels Allen, Publicity
publicity@jgscv.org

Barbara Algaze, FHL
barbara@jgscv.org

David Oseas, Webmaster
webmaster@jgscv.org

from the floor. There were none. Therefore, the vote at the December meeting will be by acclamation. See page 11 for bios on the five nominees. Thank you to Hal Bookbinder for chairing the committee and Sara Applebaum and Issie Perel for serving on the Nominations Committee.

It is bittersweet that the JGSCV Board will be saying goodbye to founding member Stew Bernstein who has served on the board since its inception 9 years ago. Stew was the “grain of sand” who kept writing to me when I was the VP of Programs for JGSLA asking when we would have meetings in the Conejo Valley. Stew also was the person who first approached Temple Adat Elohim about hosting our meetings. It was Stew’s idea and contacts that allowed JGSCV to hold the computer workshops at the Conejo Valley Adult Education School. We will miss his guidance but he is still a JGSCV member and we hope to see him often.

The Agoura Hills Librarian has advised that the central office has catalogued all of the outstanding JGSCV books for our permanent library. All are on the shelves in our area of the Library. Remember that neither of our libraries are circulating libraries, but the Agoura Hills Library is open Monday-Saturday-including evenings M-W and has computers and copy machines available to help you. Thank you to Issie Perel, JGSCV Librarian for keeping the library updated. And a special thank you to JGSCV’s webmaster David Oseas who made the searchable spreadsheet of our permanent library available on our website for all to use (www.jgscv.org go to library then permanent).

In January, 2015 a new members-only benefit will be available. JGSCV members who have paid their 2015 dues will be able to take advantage of discounts on: findmypast, Legacy Webinars and MyHeritage. More will be announced at the December 21 meeting and only those who join or renew for 2015 will be able to apply for this new benefit.

JGSCV “officially” started its 2015 membership campaign at the October 6 meeting. We are at an all-time high for members and hope this trend continues! If you join or renew between now and our December 21 meeting—**and attend** that meeting, you will be eligible to win one of many great genealogical prizes including the grand prize of an Ancestry.com worldwide one-year subscription. There are many other subscriptions and genealogical programs as prizes each worth substantially more than a single annual membership to JGSCV! A membership form is on page 16.

A brief review JGSCV’s 2014 year is on page 13.

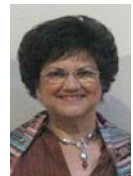
Looking for a Chanukah gift? JGSCV will provide a lovely Chanukah certificate made out to the person of your choice when you purchase a gift JGSCV membership.

We return to Sunday afternoon meetings on Sunday, December 21, 1:30-3:30 p.m. - but come 30 minutes early to use the traveling library. The schmoozing corner begins 20 minutes before the meeting. We hope you will attend our annual Chanukah and Membership meeting. Our program is with the incomparable Crista Cowan, the Barefoot Genealogist © of Ancestry.com. Crista will be talking on *Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy Methodology on Ancestry.com*.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors, have a Happy Chanukah and to our non-Jewish members and friends a Merry Christmas.

Looking forward to seeing you on December 21!

Jan Meisels Allen



Have You Heard of Yiddishkayt?

Yiddishkayt is a trend setting, L.A. based non-profit that has been around for 20 years and draws on the Jewish culture's legacy for inspiration and promotes the Yiddish language. For example, *Unbounded* is a program that offers 10-16 year olds an opportunity to relate the wisdom of the Yiddish culture to contemporary issues that affect kids worldwide.

Helix gives university students immersion insights into Eastern European culture.

There is much, much more. Explore on your own: www.yiddishkayt.org

Site Pick: Jewish Gem's Genealogy: Mining for Your Elusive Ancestors

Marilyn Robinson finds and highlights unusual vital records, lists and documents that have content or interest to Jewish Genners. Visit her site and her blog on a regular basis and you may find a link on your town or family name. <http://yourjewishgem.blogspot.com>



Ancestry.com Free Genealogy Toolkit

In October, [Ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) released a free genealogy toolkit. It is simply a PDF file containing a list of (and links to) free resources offered by the website. Download your free Ancestry.com genealogy toolkit by clicking on the link at <http://c.ancestry.com/cs/media/social-research-genealogy-toolkit.pdf>

Genealogy Treks: Road Scholar aka Elderhostel

Besides our IAIGS annual International Jewish Genealogy Conference (Jerusalem 2015, Seattle 2016), Road Scholar <http://www.roadscholar.org> once known as ElderHostel, offers a few genealogy treks including the National Archives and the LDS Library in Salt Lake City. They also offer a few trip that highlight Jewish history.

Most Misused Social Security Number Was 078-05-1120.

In 1938, wallet manufacturer the E. H. Ferree Company in Lockport, New York, decided to promote its product by showing how a Social Security card would fit into its wallets. A sample card, used for display purposes, was inserted in each wallet. Company Vice President and Treasurer Douglas Patterson thought it would be a clever idea to use the actual SSN of his secretary, Mrs. Hilda Schrader Whitcher <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/history/ssn/misused.html>

MISSION STATEMENT JGSCV

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley & Ventura County

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 both beginners and experienced genealogists, share information with each other.

ABOUT JGSCV: The 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.

JGSCV Membership

2015 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit.

To join, please print out the membership form on our website at 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)

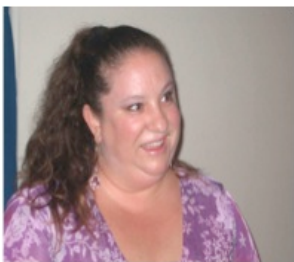
The JGSCV will hold a general meeting, co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim, on Sunday, December 21, 2014 at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Come Join Us For Our Annual Chanukah/Membership Renewal Party*



The Topic: Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy Methodology on Ancestry.com

Are you still searching, after all these years, for that same elusive record about one particular ancestor? Come spend the afternoon with Crista Cowan, The Barefoot Genealogist. She will demonstrate some of her favorite tips for searching the 15 billion+ records available on Ancestry.com. She will use specific examples in the census and immigration records collections to demonstrate both smart search habits and best genealogy methodology practices.



Speaker: Crista Cowan "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 2015. You must be present to win! Light refreshments will be served celebrating Chanukah and our membership drive. There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV. Annual dues are \$25 for an individual and \$30 for a family.

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.



JGSCV really, really used to need an assistant editor for our newsletter, “Venturing Into Our Past”. New member Andrea Maisson has volunteered and brings much experience and many skills. You undoubtedly noticed the product of her work on page three of this issue with a more contemporary re-design. Please join me in welcoming Andrea to the JGSCV family as well as this newsletter.

THE SCHMOOZING CORNER is available if you would like individual insights for your genealogical pursuits from an experienced JGSCV member. Pictured center in the photo right is JGSCV founding member Werner Frank leading the SCHMOOZING CORNER in November. (Tom Allen is far right and Allan Linderman is far left.) Come to the front right corner of the meeting room and look for the SCHMOOZING CORNER sign 20 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin. **And, if you can't be at the SCHMOOZING CORNER this month, you can “ASK THE JGSCV EXPERT”.** See how on the bottom of this page.




You can help JGSCV when you shop at Amazon.com by simply entering the Amazon site from JGSCV's **home page**. Start at <http://www.jgscv.org> and scroll to the bottom to click on the Amazon graphic (like the one here). 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 recently discovered that some ‘ad blockers’ remove the Amazon graphic. That can easily be disabled for the JGSCV site while it remains in effect on all other sites.

Believe it or not, registration is open for the **2015 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy** to be held July 6-10 in Jerusalem. The preliminary website already includes a ‘call for papers’ and hotel and travel information as well as registration forms. The discounted conference rate is available from July 2-12 to accommodate attendees who plan to stay longer. Visit <http://www.iajgs2015.org/>

If you enjoy and are enriched by JGSCV programs, please remember to renew your membership or join for the first time. JGSCV dues help defray the costs required to develop such a full schedule of fertile programs and speakers to enhance your genealogical research and experience. A membership form can be accessed and completed from the website www.jgscv.org and page 16.



**IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award
Winner, Hal Bookbinder will lead the
SCHMOOZING CORNER on December 21st**

Do you have questions about your family history research you would like to have answered by an expert? Send questions to: newslettereditor@jgscv.org for an expert's answer. Names will be withheld if preferred.

Highlights from- The Margarine Moonshiners From Minsk: Conducting Story – Driven Research

By Jan Meisels Allen

Tammy Hepps regaled JGSCV with her excellent presentation of the story of her great-grandfather who sold margarine as butter and was incarcerated in Leavenworth as a result. And he was not the only “scoundrel” in the family doing this! It was a family affair with his brother and brothers-in-law involved. The story was funny as well as a learning experience on how to do genealogy by storytelling and research.

History of Margarine

To better understand the story, a bit of margarine history is required. Margarine was invented in France in 1869, because Napoleon III, saw the “value” of a cheap butter substitute for his poorer subjects. In its original form it was white and pearly in color-not yellow like butter. In came a Dutch firm that improved upon the methods by dyeing the margarine yellow to look like butter. The dairy industry didn’t like this at all—it terrified the dairy farmers that a substitute that looks like but is less expensive than butter was now available. Dairy farmers successfully lobbied for restrictions that banned the use of yellow dyes to make margarine look more appetizing. Artificially colored butter became contraband. In 1886 the US Congress placed a tax on margarine –originally several cents per pound and later increased substantially--and made the IRS responsible for collecting the tax. Margarine was the first wholly manufactured food and those making it were called “moonshiners” for “moonshine butter”. It was not until the food shortages after World War II that things changed.

The Family

Hepps’s family is the Julius Wesosky (~1854-1928) and Anna Chatak (~1854-1917) family: Sarah, Jacob, Minnie, Louis and Rebecca. Tammy had heard stories growing up and started her genealogy quest by studying and tracing lines of descent using family photographs to help with the family stories. Tammy considers storytelling the art of using words and imagery to present a fact

December, 2014

supported narrative that engages the listener/reader etc. in the best research techniques of genealogy in order to share the best family stories.

By researching through Ancestry.com’s US Penitentiary records she was surprised to find the Leavenworth Penitentiary records of her great-grandfather Jacob Wesoky and his brother Louis. They had the same incarceration dates and consecutive inmate numbers—making her realize they had to be “hers”. Newspaper research also played a role in her genealogy research. She found an article in the *Washington Times* from 1910 about the brothers’ sentence and fine for violating laws governing the sale of margarine. To sell margarine legally one had to get a license, pay a fee and put stamps on the margarine tubs. The Wesoky family reused stamps and margarine tubs. She also found a 1902 newspaper article that mentioned the first arrest of a Wesoky brother-in-law (Goodman) who was arrested in Brooklyn, NY for selling a mixture of half butter and half hog fat to Hebrew grocers—definitely not pareve! In addition to a fine he was excommunicated from his synagogue for selling hog butter.



Across the Hudson River in New Jersey, there was a great deal of margarine activity in violation of the law. Again using newspapers, Hepps was able to trace an additional arrest of Jacob Wesoky including selling a mixture of margarine and butter to Hebrew grocers in New York, just like his brother-in-law. He pled not guilty to both but entered into a compromise with the government. The actual crime was not paying the tax that was placed on margarine by the US Congress.

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

Jacob and Louis moved from the New York and New Jersey area to Pittsburgh. The IRS considered Pittsburgh to be the worst margarine district in the world. This was found by Hepps' researching city directories and naturalization papers. Using city directories it was learned that Jacob's profession changed from butter dealer to the real estate business while Louis was still listed in the butter business through most of the first decade in 1900's. All that changed in 1908.

This is truly a family affair as all were involved!

Indictments were filed against both Jacob and Louis in early 1909 and the trial was in May 1909.

Hepps found this by researching court records to get the indictments, Leavenworth records for the arrest dates and newspaper articles as well as the transcript of the trial. It took the federal jury only 13 minutes to find both Wesoky brothers "Bad Butter Men" guilty of manufacturing and selling margarine as butter. (Another brother-in-law, Luskin, was also found guilty but received a lighter sentence.)

And while the Wesoky brothers are in Pittsburgh, the Goodman brothers-in-law are on trial in Chicago for failing to place a government stamp on the margarine they are selling. Not only were they selling and manufacturing a mixture of butter and margarine-but for another brother-in-law there were charges of attempted bribery and threats against government witnesses—including threatening to kill one of their employees. They were found guilty. Again, what Hepps did was find these pieces of the puzzle by researching newspaper articles, court records and court dockets.

She found Jacob and Louis' daily labor records at the US Penitentiary in Leavenworth and it showed that they were "sick" on three days in October 4, 5, and 13- Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—so they were trying to be observant while in prison. From the prison files she found letters where Jacob's "mental stress" was detailed. Jacob's wife wrote directly to the warden about his health issues. Brother-in-law Max Luskin received a shortened

sentence by Presidential intervention due to his wife being ill and she having no means of support.

What Hepps did with all the research was turn each "fragment" into a story. Family lore is the starting point but the story needs to be documented. She met with family to share photographs. The types of records used were wide ranging: the basic vital records and census; extended records such as city directories, immigration records, military records, gravestones; specialized records such as prison records and court records; historical context such as newspapers and period books and oral histories; topical research in archival collections, journal articles and the addition of "personal color" by talking with living relatives, reviewing family papers and photographs.

Once the "fragments" are known then one has to connect the dots between events. Make certain that the pieces are "interesting" and let your curiosity guide you in your storytelling.

Treelines

Tammy Hepps founded the company known as "Treelines" (<https://www.treelines.com/>). This is how to create what you have done and have stories about the lines in your tree. You can build upon or import a GEDCOM and bring your stories on the tree. While the default is private, it can be made public to see how others wrote simple stories. It is possible to upload photographs. The site is free.



Several of Tammy's cousins attended the meeting including Sandy Malek, JGSLA President. Sandy (above with Tammy) helped with the research. When Sandy participated last year in JGSCV's ethic panels she alluded to the family selling "traif" and being incarcerated. Grandsons of some of scoundrel brothers-in-law whom Tammy had not met previously were also in attendance!

History of Jewish Migration to the United States

By Gary Mokotoff

Reprinted with permission from Ancestry.com

Jews have been coming to the Americas literally since Columbus discovered America. Luis De Torres (right), a Jew, was Columbus' interpreter on his maiden trip. Migration of Jews through the centuries came in waves primarily because of persecution, but also for economic or political reasons.



In 1492, the Spanish monarchy demanded that all Jews convert to Christianity or leave the country. Many chose to stay and continued to observe Judaism in secret as crypto-Jews. Some of these crypto-Jews fled to the Spanish colonies in the Americas to escape the Inquisition. One of the early colonies, Santa Elena, was located in today's South Carolina. A list of colonists shows many with Jewish surnames. In fact, the leader of the colony, Juan Pardo, may have been crypto-Jew because Pardo is a Jewish surname. The colony was disbanded in 1587.

Other crypto-Jews fled to the colony of Mexico and established their own towns in today's New

Mexico. Better known are the group of Jews who came to Nieuw Amsterdam (now New York) in 1654 from Recife, Brazil, and permanently settled there. Recife was a Dutch colony conquered by the Portuguese and the Jews feared they would be persecuted at the Inquisition.

Colonial Migration (1654–1840)

It is estimated that fewer than 15,000 Jews came to settle in the United States prior to the first major migration—German Jews starting in 1840. The early settlers established their synagogues, cemeteries and participated in the everyday life. Jews were present at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, and other battle sites throughout the colonies. Some were Tories. The best known Jew of the Revolutionary War period was Haym Salomon. He helped raise funds and loaned his own personal money to fund the colonial war against the British.

German Migration (1840–1881)

German Jews began to come to America in significant numbers in the 1840s. Jews participated with those who advocated



“Migration of Jews through the centuries came in waves primarily because of persecution, but also for economic or political reasons.”

revolution and reform in Germany, and when this movement was suppressed, many Jews fled to the United States to avoid persecution, restrictive laws and economic hardship. Many became peddlers and died peddlers. A few became retail giants such as Bernard Gimbel (previous page) and Isidor Straus (founder of Macy's, who died on the Titanic).

Eastern European Migration (1881–1924)

In 1881, Czar Alexander II was assassinated and it was blamed on the Jews. What followed were numerous pogroms until World War I. This caused a tremendous migration of Jews from Eastern Europe (at that time Russia included today's Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and portions of Poland). It is estimated that more than 2 million Jews immigrated to the U.S. It is also claimed that 90% of Jewish Americans today owe their heritage to these immigrants. Many of them Americanized their surnames due to anti-Semitism and the desire to assimilate. Tartasky became Tarr, Chajkowski became Shaw, Levine became LeVine. It is a challenge to many people trying to trace their family history when the name in the Old Country is not known. There are solutions.

Interwar/Holocaust Period (1924–1945)

In 1924, Congress passed onerous immigration laws that virtually cutoff immigration from such places as Eastern Europe and Italy. It is estimated that fewer than 100,000 Jews immigrated during this period. A number of German Jews fleeing Hitler's rise to power managed to come to the U.S. in the 1930s. Examples are Albert Einstein and Henry Kissinger. Attempts to rescue Jews fell on deaf ears of the U.S. government and immigration laws prevented their escaping the Nazi onslaught. During World War II immigration, in general, came to a virtual standstill.

Holocaust Survivors (1945–1960)

After World War II, the U.S. opened its gates to refugees of the war. This included more than

250,000 Jews according to HIAS (Hebrew Immigration Aid Society). In the 1970s, the term "Holocaust survivors" was created to identify these individuals. Many were sole survivors of their family who often married other sole survivors and built new lives here. Some of the earliest personal computers were built by Commodore and Atari, founded by Jack Tramiel, a Holocaust survivor.

Recent Years

Persecution in Middle East countries such as Iran and Iraq caused most of the Jews in these countries to flee to the U.S. and Israel in the 1950s and 60s. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Jews left the countries of the former Soviet Union and immigrated to other countries including the U.S. Interestingly, these Russian Jews have kept their surnames, undoubtedly due to the decline of anti-Semitism in this country. Such a person is Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google.

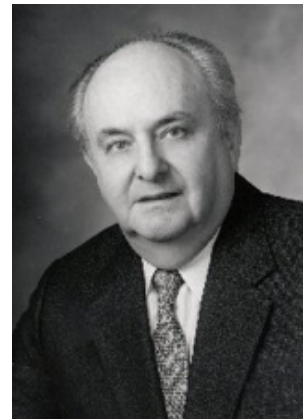
A more detailed description of Jewish migration to America through 1924 can be found at

<http://tinyurl.com/bqm3xgc> .

Gary Mokotoff is a noted author, lecturer and leader of Jewish genealogy. He has been recognized by three major genealogical groups for his achievements. He is the first person to receive the Lifetime

Achievement Award of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies

(IAJGS); recipient of the Grahame T. Smallwood Award of the Association of Professional Genealogists; and the Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern Humanitarian Award of the Federation of Genealogical Societies.



I Am A Survivor

Elizabeth Klein Brown, 96 years old, is the cousin of JGSCV member Joanne Cadis who provided this preface to the following story: *“She (Elizabeth) told me she started smoking very young and her father found out and made her promise to quit which she did.*

When they were on the train going to the camps they knew it might be over for them so she asked him to release her from her promise not to smoke, and he did. I can't imagine the hopeless feeling they had and the fear they would not be together again.”



It was April 1944 when the Nazis finally got to Hungary. I was 26 years old when I was one of many who were rounded up and sent to Auschwitz. Actually, they sent us directly to Birkenau, which was not yet completely finished. But we knew about the ovens and what our destiny was to be. We were housed in barracks that held 500 people and which were not completed – no roofs and no floors.

We talked all night trying to learn if anyone knew about our relatives and friends who we thought would also be there. I can still remember the Capo (the female guard who was Jewish but worked for the Nazis) calling out: “What are you all talking about! Take a deep breath and smell the flesh burning. Those are your friends and relatives who you are waiting to see.”

It is too difficult for me to talk about all that happened before May 8, 1945 when, at the end of the war, the 5th Division of the American Army found the survivors of the death march which had been created by the Germans. The death march, which I was a part of, started with 1000 people. By the time the Americans found us there were 97. There were two Jewish

doctors among the American soldiers. I can still remember how they cried when they saw us – they couldn't believe that people in our condition could survive. The Americans made a hospital for us and there I was given American blood and another infusion, which seemed to bring me back to life. I can also remember the smell of the coffee, but I don't think we were given any.

We were, of course, much relieved that the Americans evacuated us. We had a long and complicated journey until we came to America. We had some relatives in Paris, and so we were there for two years. It was very difficult to get the proper status to get into the United States. Since our last place of residence was not a “Displaced Persons” camp sponsored by the Americans, we did not qualify as displaced persons.

After attempting a variety of strategies to enter the United States with no success, one day I decided to contact President Truman personally. Of course my English was very limited, so I wrote a letter, very carefully, in Hungarian. I took it to the Berlitz Language School in Paris. A kind person there translated it from the Hungarian to English. Then I sent it to President Truman at the White House. Within a short period of time, I actually received a reply from the White House saying that the American Consulate had been instructed to grant us a visa.

So in 1948, my husband and I and our one-year old son, Peter, came to the United States.

I truly believe that I survived the horrors of the holocaust and overcame the barriers of bureaucracy in order to raise our son Peter, who became a wonderful, generous person.

Ed. Note: For more on ‘Death Marches’ visit this page at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum site: <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007734>

Forthcoming JGSCV Elections

As per the JGSCV Bylaws, a duly appointed Nominating Committee, chaired by Hal Bookbinder (with board member Israel Perel and general member Sara Applebaum) has recommended the following slate of individuals to fill the five two-year positions on the JGSCV board effective January 2015:

Jan Meisels Allen
Rosalie Bell
Debra Kay-Blatt
Karen Lewy
Helene Rosen

The terms of four of the nine existing board members are expiring at the end of this year. Stuart Bernstein, whose term of office expires the end of 2015 advised the Nominating Committee that he is leaving the board at the end of this year. At the November 3rd JGSCV meeting a call for nominations from the floor resulted in no responses. Therefore, nominations were closed and the election will be by acclamation at the December 21st meeting.

Nominee biographies are below.

IAN MEISELS ALLEN- currently serves as President, JGSCV and is a JGSCV founding member. She served on the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies [IAJGS] board 2004-2013. She continues to serve as Chairperson, IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee and serves as the IAJGS sponsoring representative on the Records Preservation and Access Committee (FGS/NGS/IAJGS). In 2013, the National Genealogical Society (NGS) awarded Jan its *President's Citation* in recognition of her outstanding and continuing contributions for vigilance in support of records preservation and in defense of public access to public records. Jan was invited to speak in Berlin, Germany, June 2014 on access to holocaust records to committee members of the

December, 2014

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Jan has written articles for *Avotaynu* and JGSCV's *Venturing Into Our Past*. Jan served in various administrative capacities for the past six IAJGS conferences. Prior to helping found JGSCV, Jan was a 5-year board member and first vice president-programming of JGS Los Angeles. She began her genealogy research in 1998 tracing her Polish, Galician and Hungarian roots. She is married to Tom Allen (another JGSCV founding member) going on 35 years.

ROSALIE BELL (known as Ro)- currently serves on the JGSCV Publicity Committee. She is a founding member of JGSCV. She has been doing genealogical research for seven years primarily in Russia, Poland, and Belarus. She joined JGSCV hoping to learn and obtain information and solve the family mystery of what happened to her father's two sisters, their husbands, and children in what was then Poland. Solving the mystery and a cousin's subsequent trip to Divin in what is now Belarus, the pictures and information she received encouraged her to continue and to investigate her mother and father-in-law's families (both from Russia). She is currently struggling with the challenge of obtaining information about her mother-in-law's family.

Rosalie has had a lifetime career as a clinical psychologist. She studied at UC Berkeley and NYU receiving her BA, MA, and Ph.D. She has found that her negotiating skills have served her well in all endeavors she undertakes. She loves talking to and helping people, researching history of various areas and serves as a docent in a local museum.

Rosalie is married and has three grown sons and (in her words) two perfect grandchildren!

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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 six 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. She has made presentations to JGSCV and is a frequent facilitator for the Schmoozing Corner. Debra is married to JGSCV board and founding member Warren Blatt.

KAREN LEWY- is the Treasurer of JGSCV. Karen spent her career as a global project manager in banking. She started her genealogical research activities in 2010, and joined JGSCV in October 2011 after moving from Baltimore, MD to the Conejo Valley to be

closer to her adult children. She maintains family trees containing over 1000 names and is continuing to research ancestors from Germany, Lithuania and Poland.

HELENE ROSEN- is the current Membership Vice President, a founding member of JGSCV and an active participant of the JGSCV cemetery project. Helene wrote articles for JGSCV's *Venturing Into Our Past* on finding a relative in Australia, using Steve Morse's site to find her grandmother's steamship record and her genealogical visit to Texas. 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.

JGSCV Meeting Dates Through August, 2015*

At Temple Adat Elohim

December, 21 2014 Monday 1:30-3:30-PM PM Crista Cowan, *Smart Search Tips and Genealogy Methodology*. "The Barefoot Genealogist"[®] returns with hints on how to best use ancestry.com, new records and more! AND, enjoy JGSCV's Chanukah Party with valuable prizes for members who are present.

2015

January 4, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 Stuart Tower, author of *Branko*

February 15, 2015 Sunday 1:00-5:00 Annual Assisted Research Afternoon- Los Angeles Family History Library Members Only

March 1, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 Janette Silverman, *Ancient Texts Lead to Genealogical Discoveries: The Lives Our Ancestors Led*

April 12, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 Megan Lewis, Reference Librarian, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Annual Yom Hashoah Program

May 3, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 Marion Werle, *You've Found Some Records Now What?*

June 7, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30

August 2, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30 *Genealogy In the Round*

*All programs subject to change. Check website www.jgscv.org

JGSCV Year In Review

JGSCV had a busy year! We celebrated our 9th anniversary in October.

The most important item for the year is that we continued to grow and at the time this article is being written we have 161 members –an all-time high! We hope to keep that momentum going.

From the beginning, Temple Adat Elohim has offered JGSCV use of its beautiful facilities for our jointly sponsored programs. We have been most fortunate to have this wonderful relationship with the Temple and look forward to many more years as we embark on our tenth year together.

Last year, JGSCV joined three genealogical organizations and we have continued those memberships: The Federation of Genealogical Societies [FGS], National Genealogy Society [NGS] and the California State Genealogical Alliance. Since our inception in 2005, JGSCV has been a member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies [IAJGS]. Each of these organizations bring something to JGSCV- and we are part of the larger genealogical family- internationally, Jewish and non-Jewish and the state of California.

In late 2013, JGSCV was able to forge an agreement with the LA County Public Library to house our permanent library. All of our permanent library books have now been catalogued into the LA County System and are available for use at the Library in our designated area. JGSCV Librarian Issie Perel created an excel spreadsheet with the listings and JGSCV Webmaster David Oseas developed it into a searchable list of our permanent library now available on our website. We continued to grow our library with purchases and through donations.

Seventeen JGSCV members attended the IAJGS 34th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy held July 27-August 1, 2014 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Several JGSCV members also participated as presenters and the lead conference co-chair was our own Hal Bookbinder.

In 2014 Issie Perel joined the board of directors. Issie took over as JGSCV's librarian in 2013 and retains that important role after being elected to the board.

JGSCV Board member Marion Werle resigned from the board due to personal reasons, but is still a member and will do a program for us in May, 2015.

JGSCV founding member and board member Stewart Bernstein advised that he would be leaving the board at the end of 2014. Stew remains a JGSCV member and will continue to participate, as he is able.

Every month JGSCV publishes an informative, beautifully designed electronic newsletter which is shared not only with our members and attendees but with a total of 500 people and organizations worldwide. Allan Linderman is the newsletter editor and he frequently receives accolades about the excellence of his work. JGSCV is always looking for member stories and if you have something to share please contact Allan.

JGSCV updated its approximately 300 resources on its website last May and JGSCV's webmaster, David Oseas, will be updating it again shortly.

The Publicity Committee has four members: Rosalie Bell, Barbara Levasseur, Diane Wainwood and Jan Meisels Allen. Each month the committee sends out our

Title	Category*	Author	Place of Publication	Publisher	Year	Call Number
A Brotherhood of Memory Jewish Landsmanshaftn in the New World	EE	Weisser, Michael	NY	Basic Books	1985	R 974.7
A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union 1881- present (1988)	EE	Gitelman, Zvi	NY	Schocken Books	1988	R 947.004924
A Convenient Hatred: The History of Antisemitism	M	Phyllis Goldstein	MA	Anti-Defamation League Facing History And Ourselves	2012	R 305.8924 GOLDF
A Dictionary of Jewish Names and their History	GHT	Kagonoff, Benzion C.	NY	Shocken Books	1977	R 929.4
A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames From the Russian Empire, 2nd printing	EE	Beider, Alexander	NJ	Avotaynu	1993	R 929.4089624047
A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames From the Russian Empire, First Edition	EE	Beider, Alexander	NJ	Avotaynu	1993	R 929.408924047 BEIDER
A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654-1875	JHNA	Schappes, Morris	NY	Citadel Press	1950	R 973.08924 SCHAPPES
A Field Guide to Visiting a Jewish Cemetery	GHT	Segal, Rabbi Joshua L.	Nashua, NH	Jewish Cemetery Publishing	2005	R 929.1 SEGAL
A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in Lithuania	EE	Aaron, Sam	London	JGS Great Britain	2005	R 929.1072089 AAI
A Historical Bibliography of Polish Towns, Villages and Regions (Except Warsaw and Krakow)	EE	Packwas, Edward A.	Chicago, IL	Polish Genealogical Society	1990	R 016.8438 KADMIERCZAK
A History of Jewish Costume	M	Rubens, Alfred	NY	Funk & Wagnalls	1967	R 391
A History of Jewish Dress	M	Margolis, Max and Max	Philadelphia, PA	Porcupine Press	1967	R 929.1072089 AAI

meeting notices to approximately 100 organizations from local newspapers, synagogues and libraries to senior centers. If you know of a locale that would be interested in receiving our monthly meeting notice please let us know. The way JGSCV grows is for more people to learn about us.

A new committee was formed to take photographs and capture information included on synagogue memorial plaques as a part of an IAJGS-JewishGen effort. Ultimately, this will be posted on the JewishGen website. The members of the committee are: Sara Applebaum, Dalya Dektor and Diane Wainwood. They will be contacting all the synagogues in our geographic area to request permission to take the photographs and record information as this an excellent genealogical tool. Often, one can learn the name of the deceased's father as well as the deceased's birth and/or death dates or age.

The 2014 Nominations Committee was chaired by Hal Bookbinder with JGSCV member Sara Applebaum and JGSCV Board Member Issie Perel.

The benefit of being a JGSCV member was greatly enhance by the 35 emails regarding free access on various genealogical programs, genealogical webinars, programs of interest in the greater LA area and more.

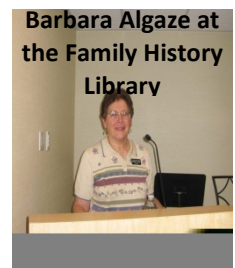
JGSCV held a members-only Ancestry.com computer workshop with Crista Cowan on "*Getting The Most Out of the Ancestry.com*".

We held a schmoozing corner for each of the program meetings — except during the annual assisted research afternoon. The schmoozing corner is available if attendees would like individual insights for their genealogical pursuits from an experienced JGSCV member. We thank Debra Kay-Blatt, Warren Blatt, Hal Bookbinder and Werner Frank for facilitating the schmoozing throughout the year.

At a number of meetings we had a 5-minute genealogical hint at the beginning of the program. This is an opportunity for a "quick" hint to help members with their genealogical research.

We had 11 programs during the year:

- Joan Adler: *For the Sake of the Children: The Letters between Otto Frank and Nathan Straus Jr.*
- Annual Assisted Research Afternoon at the Los Angeles Family History Library
- Roger Lustig: *A Hundred Germanies : A Hundred Jewish Histories*
- Arthur Benveniste: *Sephardic Jews in Los Angeles*
- Yom Hashoah Commemoration: *Confronting the Holocaust: The United States Response—SS. St. Louis and 70th Anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary*
- Roundtable Discussions-on various countries and topics
- Genealogy in the Round annual program for members to share successes and failures
- Warren Blatt on "*All About JewishGen*"
- David Laskin, *From Family History to History: Bridging the Gap Using Genealogy*
- Tammy Hepps, *The Margarine Moonshiners from Minsk: Conducting Story-Driven Research*
- Crista Cowan, *Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy: Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy : Methodology on Ancestry.com*



JGSCV continues to participate with both Amazon.com as an affiliate and with Ralphs Community Program. In 2014 we have some members and friends who help JGSCV by clicking on the Amazon.com link at the bottom of each website page before they shop and also declared JGSCV their charity of choice when shopping at Ralphs. We need more participants. JGSCV does not collect enough in dues to do all that we do and the payments we receive from both Amazon.com and Ralphs provides the funding to support many of our programs which we could not do otherwise.

December, 2014

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

Ralphs Community Contribution Program To Benefit JGSCV



JGSCV's partnership with Ralphs is an important part of our revenue. Your Board relies on fees received from **Ralphs Community Contribution Program** to help defray the cost of many of our programs, speakers, books and more. The Community Contribution program makes a contribution to JGSCV each time you shop at any of the Ralphs stores with no

cost to you. It is the least expensive and easiest way to help fund your JGSCV. Everyone, even people you know who are not JGSCV members, can help by signing up for this program.

First, join Ralphs' Club. **September 1st each year you must re-join (even if you are already a member).** Besides helping JGSCV, Ralphs Club members also receive special discounts on featured purchases.

If you are already a registered participant, you only remained active until August 31, 2014 at which time you have to re-register. You can re-register for the new term at www.Ralphs.com starting **September 1, 2014**. Even if you registered as recently as July you will be required to register again starting September 1st!

Remember: You can renew or register for the first time at the JGSCV's meetings—but you must first have a Ralph's Card. You can easily obtain a card by going to the customer service desk at any Ralphs store. For more information contact Karen Lewy at karen@jgscv.org.

Once you have a Ralphs Club card, register for the Community Contribution Program by going to www.Ralphs.com and clicking on register/sign-in. This will register your Ralphs card so you will be entitled to discounts on featured items throughout each store. Include your email and create a password.

Once You Have Registered Your Ralph's Rewards Card you can sign-up for the Community Contribution Program and help JGSCV by following these simple steps

1. Log-in to www.ralphs.com:
2. Sign-in with your email address and the password you created
3. Click on "My Account" (it's the top right hand corner)
4. View all your information and edit as necessary
5. Scroll down to bottom of page where it says community awards and click edit or enroll my community contribution
6. Follow the instructions and remember to click on the circle to the left of our organization's name
7. Type in the first words of our organization i.e. "Jewish Gen" (if you only type in "Jewish" a number of organizations appear including ours, so by typing in the first few letters of our second name only we appear) and click on "search" and our name will pop up: "Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley &". Or key in our 5 digit NPO number 84732 and click 'Search'. Make certain it is our Society as there are other Jewish Genealogy Societies registered!
8. In the 'Select Your Organization Section', click on the bubble next to our name
9. Click on 'Save Changes'. Our name (Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley &.) will appear on the right side of this page. You have now completed your Online rewards card registration AND your Community Contributions registration.
10. Click on 'Logout' at the top of the page

JGSCV has been receiving from Ralphs between \$50-\$90 per quarter, or equal to 2-3 JGSCV memberships per quarter. Only 19 JGSCV members/friends are participating—why not you?

December, 2014

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



2015 Membership/Renewal Form

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

*Member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

www.JGSCV.org

Dues paid now are good through December 2015

Date _____

Check one:

This is a New Membership _____ Renewal _____

Single \$ 25.00 _____ + \$1.00** Family* \$30.00 _____ + \$2.00**

*family defined as two people living in the same household

** \$1 per person is a voluntary donation to the IAJGS Stern Award, granted annually when it recognizes institutions for outstanding work in the creation and availability of resources for Jewish Genealogy.

Additional voluntary contributions:

Library Acquisition Fund \$ _____ Programs Fund \$ _____

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for either fund \$5.00)

Make check out to: JGSCV Mail application to: Helene Rosen,
28912 Fountainwood St.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zipcode + 4 _____

Day telephone _____ Evening telephone _____

E-mail address _____

Talents that you have to share (accounting skills, language skills, computer skills, translation, etc.)
