

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



JGSCV

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

January 2015

Volume 10 Issue 4

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Crista Cowan, the Barefoot Genealogist[®], Ancestry.com is a JGSCV favorite repeat speaker! This time Crista spoke on *Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy Methodology on Ancestry.com*. She demonstrated some of her favorite tips for searching 15+ billion records available on Ancestry.com using specific examples in the census and immigration records collections demonstrating both smart search habits and best genealogy methodology practices. Each time we learn more and more from Crista and her exuberance for the subject is contagious! To read the highlights of the program see page 6.

Thank you to Hal Bookbinder for facilitating the schmoozing corner before the program. Hal did double duty as he also ran the election for JGSCV board members—see below. Because of time constraints due to the gifts and to maximize Crista's presentation time, we did not have the 5-minute genealogical hint. If anyone would like to give one at an upcoming meeting please let me know.

A highlight of the meeting was the annual membership renewal drive and Chanukah gifts for members. Crista randomly picked the winning names. See the winners on page 10. JGSCV thanks the following genealogy companies for contributing the prizes: Ancestry.com (worldwide subscription was the grand prize), Family Tree Maker, FindMyPast, Fold3.com, Legacy Family Tree, Legacy



Crista Cowan, Ancestry's Barefoot Genealogist[®] December's speaker on 'Smarter Searching Tips on Ancestry.com'

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, January 4th 1:30-3:30 PM

"BRANKO": In Praise of a Good Man's Journey Through Life

Stuart Tower, the author of 'BRANKO' uses historical fiction to describe Jewish life and migration from the German occupied Soviet Union to the U.S.

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Webinars, Mocavo Gold, Newspapers.com, and Roots Magic. There was also a genealogically relevant book as one of the prizes.

At the November meeting, JGSCV Board Member and Nominations Committee member, Issie Perel gave the Nominations Committee report to the membership. With no one rising from the floor to oppose the nominations or ask to be added to the slate, the nominations were closed. The election at this meeting was held by acclamation. Nominating Committee Chairperson Hal Bookbinder, conducted the election for the five board positions. Four of the five board members with expiring terms were reelected: Jan Meisels Allen, Debra Kay Blatt, Karen Lewy and Helene Rosen. Rosalie Bell who replaces Stewart Bernstein now holds the fifth seat. Stew opted to leave the board due to family commitments. The JGSCV Bylaws require half of the board members to be elected each year for a two-year term. Thank you to Hal Bookbinder for chairing the committee and Sara Applebaum and Issie Perel for serving on the Nominations Committee.

Per the bylaws, the board decides the role each board member assumes. Those decisions will be made at the January 4 Board meeting.

For those who have not yet renewed please do so now. A membership form is on page 17. At the end of the program meeting on the 21st we are at 94 members for 2015- about 56% of our 2014 membership. For 2014 we are at 167 members-an all-time high!. While the 2015 membership is approximately the same as last year at the same time for 2014 membership, we really would appreciate your submitting your dues which helps pay for the speakers, additions to the libraries, and other items to keep your society going.

We have started a year-long project of having members submit stories of their research about ancestors or themselves for World War 1 (2014 is the centennial of beginning of the "Great War" and World War 11 (2015 is the 70th anniversary of end of that war. Holocaust research stories are welcome. See page 11 for the first story submitted by Werner Frank.

One of the ways JGSCV does outreach is to offer information at select genealogy functions: Southern California Genealogical Jamboree, Ventura County Fair, Agoura Hills Library at our permanent collection area and now the largest of the genealogical conferences: RootsTech which will be held in Salt Lake City this February. The more people know about JGSCV the more likely they are to join our group. Andrea Massion a new JGSCV member, with excellent graphics skills updated our brochure for these functions and created a beautiful, professional document. Andrea is also working with Allan Linderman our newsletter editor, by authoring page 3—answering the "call" for the volunteer that Allan has been "advertising" for in this newsletter. We are delighted that Andrea has agreed to volunteer and share her expertise in these areas. See page 3 for the redesign—thank you Andrea!

Looking forward to seeing you on January 4th where our program is *Branko, In Praise of a Good Man's Journey through Life* with Stuart Tower. Autographed copies of the book will be available for \$20--cash or check.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors, Happy Chanukah and for those of our members and friends who celebrate Christmas, have a joyous holiday. For all have a happy, healthy and safe 2015.

Jan Meisels Allen

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



Genealogy on the Television

Whether hobby, career or passion---genealogy research has made great leaps in popularity in the United States, according to research by Ancestry.com which states that participation among multi-generations is 30% higher in the last 5 years. The Internet, and the TV shows mentioned on this page, along with *Louis Gates' Finding Your Roots*, have certainly contributed to that growth. These productions all emphasize documents & proper research, not just a pretty tree graphic. Based on DNA results, and Spanish documents, Dr. Gate's production has revealed to more than one Latino celebrity guest that their ancestry includes Crypto Jews in New Mexico, and Spain, and that free Black Americans owned slaves.

New TV Season: "Who Do You Think You Are"

When "Who Do You Think You Are?" returns to TLC TV on Tuesday, February 24, 2015, more celebrities will discover life-changing facts about their ancestors. The 2-time Emmy nominated series has 8 new episodes.

Executive-produced by Lisa Kudrow and Dan Bucatinsky, results are researched by genealogists around the world, and compiled into great television when each guest is introduced to their historical pasts by the actual researchers via documents and locations.

More TV Genealogy

PBS' Genealogy Roadshow : Season 2

Serving up pirate stories, heroes of the Holocaust and more--all in the context of tracking down every day people's family history, this season premieres Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at 8:00 p.m. ET and airs every Tuesday through February 24 on PBS.

"Genealogy Roadshow" uncovers fascinating stories of Americans in and around St. Louis, Philadelphia and New Orleans," says a PBS press release. "Genealogy Roadshow stars genealogists Kenyatta D. Berry, Joshua Taylor and Mary Tedesco and features participants with unique claims and storylines, including a woman seeking to find out if she is descended from the infamous pirate Blackbeard.

Iraqi Jewish Archives at the U.S. Archives

When coalition forces entered Baghdad in May 2003, a U.S. Army team searching for weapons of mass destruction in the flooded basement of the Mukhabarat, the headquarters of Saddam Hussein's intelligence services, discovered over 2,700 Jewish books and tens of thousands of documents. The remarkable survival of this written record of Iraqi Jewish life is preserved at the U.S. archives. An extensive website has a search engine in English, Hebrew & Arabic- See more at: <http://www.ija.archives.gov/>

JGSCV MISSION STATEMENT

MISSION STATEMENT The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV) is a non-profit organization, run by enthusiastic volunteers, dedicated to the sharing of genealogical information, techniques, and research tools with those interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Members, who include 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.

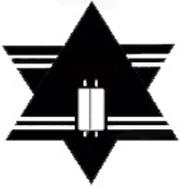
JGSCV MEMBERSHIP

2015 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30 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, January 4, 2015 at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, 1:30-3:30 p.m.



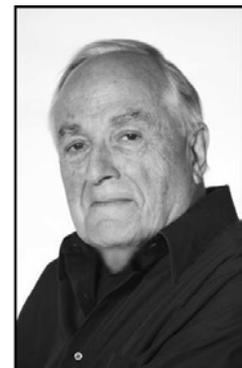
The Topic: "BRANKO": In Praise of a Good Man's Journey Through Life

Witnessing the brutal pogrom that takes his family, a six-year old survivor, goes on to a childhood fraught with abusive relatives and unspeakable Tsarist orphanages. *BRANKO* is a work of historical fiction that recounts the life of Branko Horvitch in an ongoing celebration of unyielding determination, while meeting all manner of challenges.

The January speaker, *Branko* author Stuart Tower, quickly takes the reader from the 1880's to the 1940's in German occupied Soviet Union. Through the personal history of American Brigadier General Branko Horvitch, we learn a great deal of the history of Jewish migration to the United States and the history of the times.

From his tragic beginnings to the heights of American political power, there is a taste of a bitter-sweet, but never bland life. Branko's is a world beset by disastrous world wars, rapidly changing societies, economic depressions and iconic figures from the pages of history. Through it all he is surrounded by eclectic elements of pathos, chaos, romance and humor.

Speaker: Stuart Tower is an educator, writer, lecturer, and traveler. Tower spoke to JGSCV about his first novel, *The Wayfarers*, in 2006 where Branko was also a character in the story. *BRANKO* is Tower's second novel but sixth published book. *BRANKO* was awarded the historical fiction award from the Beverly Hills International Awards. Attendees will have the opportunity to purchase the book following the lecture for \$20. The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Annual dues are \$25 for an individual and \$30 for a family.



January, 2015

JGSCV UPDATES



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 Jan Meisels Allen when she was the VP of Programs for JGSLA asking for 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. Stew has participated in giving programs, not only participating in our “Genealogy in the Round” but also gave a program on *Children of Terezin* showing the documentary

he produced and then discussed it following the showing. He was always willing to step in and help out in any way he could. We will miss his guidance but he is still a JGSCV member and we hope to see him often.

THE SCHMOOZING CORNER is available if you would like individual for your genealogical pursuits from an experienced JGSCV member. in the photo right is Hal Bookbinder leading the SCHMOOZING CORNER December. Come to the front right corner of the meeting room and look SCHMOOZING CORNER sign 20 minutes before the meeting is scheduled begin. **And, if you can’t be at the SCHMOOZING CORNER this month, “ASK THE JGSCV EXPERT”.** See how on the bottom of this page.



insights
Pictured
in
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you can

There are members-only benefits to renewing/joining JGSCV. Only dues paid-members can attend the annual assisted research afternoon at the Los Angeles Family History Library (February 15, 2015) where attendees get hands-on assistance for their personal genealogy by senior JGSCV members and volunteers at the Library. Only dues-paid members receive the personal emails from Jan–27—so far this year on special genealogical issues and opportunities and only dues-paid members may attend our special workshops. A new members-only feature starting in January includes discounts on genealogical offerings: FindMyPast (\$25 off the worldwide subscription), Legacy Webinars (50% off) and 50% off a subscription to MyHeritage. The MyHeritage offer is the only one with a very short window of opportunity—10 days in January and another 10-day opportunity later in the year. All 2015 dues paid members will receive an email from Jan in early January on each opportunity. The three organizations were explicit that only dues paid may participate so if so if you haven’t renewed or joined yet for 2015 this is the time to do so!

JGSCV continues to participate with both Amazon.com as an affiliate and with Ralphs Community Program. Simply enter 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 takes you to the same page you always start at – except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee at no cost to you. See “notices” on the JGSCV.org website for instructions for Ralphs Community Contribution Program.

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: Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy Methodology on Ancestry.com

By Jan Meisels Allen

Crista Cowan, “The Barefoot Genealogist”[®] from Ancestry.com excited and inspired our almost 60 attendees on December 21 with her program: *Smarter Searching Tips and Genealogy Methodology on Ancestry.com*. Crista is always a VERY popular presenter at JGSCV and this year was no different. Her engaging presentation, including answering questions during the presentation, was well received. She even accommodated additional questions long after her presentation ended. Crista connected to the Ancestry website for a “live” presentation providing the JGSCV audience an easy-to-follow demonstration of how to use the website.

Crista began by making a distinction between doing a search and research. Today many people rely solely on looking for information online on websites such as Ancestry.com — that is a search. *Research* is looking at archival records in an archive or repository and may take a long time to find who you are looking for—rather than clicking on a website to see if a particular person is included.

Crista also talked about how her parents went to Brigham Young University and while not majoring in the subject, took courses on family history.



Crista being their first child went along on their weekly trip to the Family History Library. Since her baby carriage slid under the microfilm reader . . . she now claims she was raised from infancy on family history.

Ancestry.com

Ancestry.com has over 15 billion records on their website. They add between one and two million records per **day**. Ancestry has ten offices with 1,700 employees around the world plus people who are involved with acquisitions. There are an additional 20-30 locations worldwide filming records to add to their ever-expanding database.

Not everything on Ancestry.com requires a subscription. One can have a tree on Ancestry without a subscription. Ancestry also provides 700 databases for free. For example the 1940 US census, some passenger lists and Holocaust records are free due to Ancestry’s collaboration with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Ancestry is in the process of indexing the Museum’s 70 million records and so far volunteers have indexed 7 million. This is the World Memory Project and if you would like to become a volunteer, when on Ancestry.com, click on the tab marked “collaborate” or go to <http://community.ancestry.com/awap>.

There are also many Jewish records on Ancestry that are also on JewishGen. Different search engines sometimes provide different search results.

Ancestry subscriptions for the US-only are \$20 per month and \$32-\$34 per month for a Worldwide Subscription. For those purchasing a one-year subscription you might want to look at AARP where you can get a 30% off discount. This is why Ancestry does not provide genealogy societies like JGSCV special discounts, as they are available through larger organizations such as AARP.

Family Trees

Anyone, including non-subscribers, may start a family tree on Ancestry. You can also export a tree from another program uploading the GEDCOM

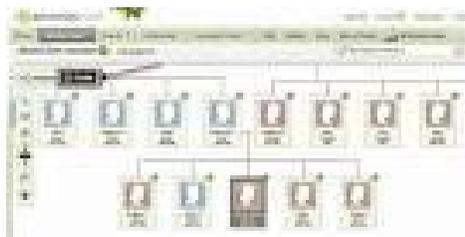
version of the tree. Note that GEDCOMS do not copy notes or photographs—just the tree. The owner of each tree determines access to that tree. The owner may adjust the settings to control who may view the tree (see below). Family Tree Maker (FTM) versions 2012, 2014 and FTM for Mac are totally in synch with the Ancestry.com website. Older FTM programs are not in synch but can be uploaded to Ancestry. Obviously if you are doing research for others—friends or clients, their trees should be separate from yours unless they are also relatives. Ancestry does not limit anyone to the number of trees they may have on the website.

If you have multiple trees on Family Tree Maker they can all be synched with Ancestry—but only one tree per one tree on Ancestry may be synched. Family Tree Maker 2012 and later versions can be synched with Ancestry.

Another suggestion was if a person changed their name, to use the field on Ancestry trees— “also known as” for the name was changed to keeping the original name in name field of the tree.

Public vs. Private Trees

There are two privacy settings: Public and Private. Anyone with a subscription to Ancestry.com may have access to any public tree. Public trees allow only the owner to see living family members. For



non-owners, it says “living” where the name would usually appear. To

show a non-living relative, that person’s record in the tree would have to include a death date (or something listed in death date field) or they must be more than 110 years old. If they were born more than 110 years ago, the information becomes “public”.

Private trees may be unindexed which means no one gets to view anything—and is used similar to a back-up service. Listing a tree as “private” can prevent a tree from being found in a search depending on the level of privacy selected. Even

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with a private tree, the owner may invite anyone to see the tree. There are three levels of permission that may be activated by clicking on invite and user name.

1. Guest- may view only and see anything
2. Contributor—can add persons, photos but is not permitted to change anything
3. Editor-can change anything. If you select this option make certain you are comfortable allowing the person to change anything. If a change is made on a tree, the owner will receive a notification by Ancestry within a week.

Even if a person is invited, the tree owner may still choose whether or not to allow that person to see living persons on the tree.

In a library, where typically Library editions of Ancestry.com are used, a person can view trees but is not able to build a tree. Note: Ancestry.com is available only at the Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, City of Los Angeles and Ventura County Public Library System. The County of Los Angeles Public Library does not have a subscription.

Shaky Leaves

By show of hands in response to a question of those with trees on Ancestry, 50 percent do search directly from a



tree. Crista discussed the difference between a shaky leaf and researching. Ancestry places a shaky leaf next to the person’s name on the tree if they have a hint that a record in their database may be relevant to your person. This is a hint not a guarantee that the record may be relevant. Shaky leaves are only placed next to someone’s name if they have a very high confidence that is the correct person. But the leaf in some instances may not be “your” person and if that is the case, and it is not your person, click on “ignore” and it disappears.

Search

The top 10 percent of Ancestry’s databases have 30 percent of the records - such as the US census

records and immigration and naturalization records. No single record has all the information genealogists are searching: birth, marriage, death military service information etc. Even a City Directory only has limited information such as name, residence and year and occasionally spouses name and occupation.

One can search across all 15 billion records which is called a “global search”. This may result in many pages of results, however, Crista suggests never going past the first page of such searches—and that is to see what “bubbles” to the top of the list.

An invaluable tool is the card catalogue. Clicking on the search button at the top of the home page and clicking on card catalogue in the drop down box will access the card catalogue.

The category search such as a census, birth, marriage, death, military, immigration and trees are the five categories which are directed and the results much more pertinent than a global search.

Databases can be a specific search such as looking at the 1910 census. Ancestry.com has more than 32,000 databases and has a customized form for the customized search from what they have indexed—such as passenger list. For example if you know someone you are researching arrived in the US in 1892, mark that date as “exact”. If you know which port of entry they arrived in, mark that “exact” (remember that not everyone arrived in New York City even if they ended up living there). Do you know the port from which they left? Antwerp, Hamburg, Bremerhaven etc. If you know the port then mark that “exact” also. What should not be marked as exact is name and birth year . . . instead use a “fudge” factor. Spelling of names and exact birth, marriage and death dates are more a phenomenon of the 20th century and still could be incorrect.

If you are searching a name go to the card catalogue—where there are 32, 529 databases -- some with millions of records in a single database. An example Crista gave from her family is to search using only initials and not first names, as you may not know the correct first name.

Using a database specific search is more successful. Type in the name of the database (that you can find in card catalogue) for example the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and only the acronym USHMM can be used for the search, and 27 databases appear. Make certain that you read the description of the databases as the description gives you information which may tell you what you want is not available—if the collection begins in 1900 and you are looking for someone in 1880 as an example.

How to View

Sometimes there is no name on the record index. Ancestry digitizes some records from the best available microfilm master—but it is not the original record. There are occasions that the legibility of the handwriting becomes an impediment for knowing the name. Crista said the left side of the page (manifest) is usually the area with the legibility problem and that is where the name is placed.

Crista talked about a search in her family where her mother was looking for her grandfather and found someone in the right part of the geographic area with the correct name and age and placed it in “pencil” for further research at some time in the future. Before she returned to that person, a cousin asked for her research and she made copies, but the copies did not show a difference between items in pencil—meaning more work needed to prove/disprove the person was the correct relative vs. one written in ink who was a confirmed family member. The cousin then worked on that part of the family tree also sharing with another cousin. Between them they added 500 people to the tree assuming the person had been “inked” in and therefore was a “verified” family member. Roll forward several decades and Crista decides to restart the family tree to make certain all is correct. She found there were four people in the same area with the same name and age. So her quest was to verify that what was there was indeed her mother’s grandfather. What she found was due to that one error of assuming the copy has an inked vs pencil entry, they had the

wrong person and she had to unlink the 500 people from the tree. Crista explained about clicking on “edit person” and click on **delete relationship** not delete related as this keeps the research in case later information finds any of the 500 are truly related.

Filters

Crista discussed the use of filters, which only appear when one starts to type. The filters used to be visible on the page directly. This new modified feature began for new users starting the second week in November and Ancestry expects all customers to be transferred to this new “look” by the end of January.

Examples of filters: “Years” could be “exact, 0 (this year) 1 year, 2 years, 5 years or 10 years. Rarely should “0” be used as people didn’t know their exact year or it could be recorded incorrectly.

Another filter example is “location”. If you type in a town and it shows in the box great—if it doesn’t show then go to the next designation—such as Kiev, Ukraine and Kiev doesn’t appear then go to the Ukraine to enter the location. As borders have changed over the years—for example what is today Poland or Lithuania was Russia in the 1800’s and early 1900’s. For better searching, put in both Poland and Russia as you are not certain how location was recorded. It was suggested that the keyword field be used sparingly—as they might have put down the next large town rather than the actual town they came from or was born in.



Answers to Miscellaneous Questions

- Ancestry has outgoing passenger lists from, Bremen, Hamburg, United Kingdom and Sweden.
- Not all records available in archives and repositories are available on Ancestry.com

as they were unable to obtain permission to digitize and place online. There is no master list of records that are not on Ancestry.com

- All (US) National Archives passenger lists are on Ancestry.com
- Use the advanced search form—it has more information therefore obtaining the “correct” person is more likely.
- Show more options for filters by checking the advanced search box.
- Wild cards must contain three characters.
- Ancestry.com has many newspapers online as well as on their newspapers.com website (a member of the Ancestry family with a separate subscription). By reading newspaper articles you can learn about the times and locations where your ancestors lived and what your family was experiencing even if their names are not mentioned. Genealogy is more than names and dates.
- Ancestry does not verify information people have posted on their trees.

Ancestry has its own YouTube Channel. Crista is on the Ancestry.com You Tube station weekly—Tuesdays at 10:00AM Pacific Time with hints on how to use Ancestry. You can go directly to the You Tube hints at: <http://ancstry.me/TBGVids>, or you may also access it directly from the bottom of the Ancestry.com homepage under the section entitled “Follow Us”. Click on the playlist and then click on “desk top education” for accessing the inventory of 230 sessions. Crista may be reached at ask@ancestry.com.

JGSCV is fortunate that Crista has family near us so we can ask her to speak when she is visiting.

2014 JGSCV CHANUKAH MEMBERSHIP PRIZE WINNERS

The annual JGSCV Chanukah Membership Drive included exciting door prizes for 11 lucky JGSCV members. December speaker Crista Cowan randomly picked member names for a stimulating selection of genealogical prizes. Doug Anderson, a new member and first time attendee, won the Grand Prize: A Worldwide Subscription to Ancestry.com. Winners not pictured: Julie Smith (Family Tree Maker) and Sandra Hall (Fold3 Subscription). Sandra is also a new member and first time attendee.



Betty Isbell

Findmypast
Subscription



Carol Brownstein

Newspapers.com
Subscription



David Oseas

Avotaynu's Guide to
Jewish Genealogy



Doug Anderson

Ancestry Worldwide
Subscription



Susan Falck

Legacy Family
Tree Webinars



Eva Cox

Mocavo Gold
Subscription



Joanne Cadis

Legacy Family Tree
Deluxe Software



Rabbi Shimon Paskow

Findmypast
Subscription



Rosalie Bell

RootsMagic 6
and Guide

My Father's Three Lives

By Werner Frank

Ed's Note: The author, a JGSCV founding Board member, presented this story at JGSCV's August meeting, "Genealogy in the Round". It is a compelling story that touches many aspects of family history searches: brickwalls, third party research, family myths and truths uncovered. And more. A special thanks to Mr. Frank for sharing this story yet again. For brevity, the author's extensive footnotes and quality illustrations have been omitted. Please contact "Venturing into Our Past" for that information at newslettereditor@jgscv.org.



I grew up with the story that my father was born twice. This tale always amazed me and led to the often repeated story of how his birth was celebrated two times, once in 1895 and the second in 1918, twenty-three years later. I recall being told that a communiqué from the German military pronounced my father killed-in-action on a battlefield in France during World War I. Subsequently, his parents were informed that he was actually alive but severely wounded. He came home to recuperate and the family welcomed him back with a second birth party.

My childhood curiosity caused me to further explore what happened to my father during the war, what battle took place and how he was wounded. In response, I recall my father pointing to the front, left side of his neck which showed a slight scar, and then tracing with his hand a trajectory to the back of his upper torso. He simply said, "The bullet went through my lungs and came out the back." On one such occasion he actually removed his undershirt and showed me the exit scar on his back. I asked him if he had had any

lingering side effects, to which he replied that he had none.

That was as far as I ever took the matter. I had concluded that since he was serving in the German army in France as a Frontsoldat (soldier at the frontline of battle), he must have been shot by some Frenchman. My level of interest at the time was satisfied; I failed to elicit more details and facts about this milestone event.

Years later, after undertaking serious research of my family's history and genealogy, I was disappointed that I had not probed further regarding my father's wartime experience. It was too late to address needed questions to my father. He passed away in 1981. How could I now piece together a significant history that had eluded me?

The pages of former issues of Stammbaum were one source of information on the subject of Jewish participation in the armies fielded by Germany. Claus K. Hirsch has delved into this matter in two articles, one related to the Prussian wars of 1813-1815 and the second describing Jewish soldiers' participation in World War I. Other articles

have appeared as well. Bibliographies accompany these articles and provide further insight to the loyalty and service given by Jewish young men to their Fatherland. However, this type of information does not get down to the specifics of the individual's life and his performance in the military. I wanted to know specifically what my father had sacrificed and given to his country.

Luck was with me. In a collection of family memorabilia, my father had actually retained his *Militärpaß*, a personal identification booklet containing his service record, as well as a number of service related photographs. The journal accounted for my father's front-line duty in the form of a soldier's personal diary. It also contained vital information regarding his induction, training, promotions, awards and duties. Fortunately, this extraordinary notebook and the accompanying photos survived our family's upheaval and immigration to the U.S.A. in 1937 and are still in my possession.

My father was Vizewachtmeister (Master Sergeant) Arthur Frank, a volunteer (Kriegsfreiwilliger) who joined the Kaiser's army on 30 December 1914, one month before his 20th birthday. He was initially assigned to the II Ersatz-Abteilung, 5th Baden Field Artillery, 76th Regiment, with headquarters at Freiburg. On 25 April 1915 he was transferred to the 6th Battery of the 76th Regiment and remained there until the end of the war.

A noteworthy member of the 76th Regiment was an officer who became a notorious underground "freedom" fighter after the war. This was Albert Leo Schlageter, a comrade-in-arms of my father. Schlageter terrorized the French occupation of the Ruhr in the early 1920s. He was ultimately captured after detonating a bridge near Calcum in March 1923. Subsequently, he was tried by the French, found guilty of sabotage, and faced a firing squad. He died in May 1923, becoming a national martyr, revered by the Nazis,

whom he had actually joined in 1922, carrying the early membership number 61.

Some of Schlageter's notoriety rubbed off on my father. Accordingly, there were gentiles in my father's hometown of Eppingen who doubted that the reach of the Nazis could ever extend to a Jew who was a field comrade of Schlageter. Little did they realize that no Jew could escape the wrath and hate of the Nazis.

(I discovered) the listings of skirmishes and battles for my father's unit . . . They begin in the period 9-10 August 1914 at Senheim-Mülhausen, extending over the next four years to Lothringen, Nancy-Epinal, Flirey, Arras, Lille, French Flanders, Cuinchy, Auchy-lez-La Bassée, Champagne, Somme, Bapaume, Scarpe, etc. It is not clear if my father was involved in all of these encounters. However, we do know with certainty that he fought in the battle at Bapaume from 21 August to 2 September 1918 and at the Siegfried line from 3 to 27 September 1918.

On 27 September, at 12:30 p.m., in a firing position 1 kilometer east of Bourlon, my father received a severe neck and chest injury. A bullet found its mark, entering the front of my father's throat and passed through his lungs before exiting from his back. He fell to the ground at a moment when the Allied forces were advancing to take control of the battlefield. The retreating German forces left my father for dead. According to family lore, his body lay immobile, seemingly without breath, and his fellow comrades assumed he was dead.

Somewhat later, the German forces went on the offensive and recaptured the territory. A soldier stumbled over my father's body and discovered that he was still alive. The medics immediately tended to him and he was revived. He was then transferred to Field Hospital number 24 and, on 4 October 1918, was transported by hospital train number 28

to St. Anna Lyceum Hospital in Elberfeld, where he recovered.

With such detailed information, I next wanted to pursue collateral records of my father by contacting appropriate contemporary German authorities that might be able to shed further light on his military service. The logical place of contact was the Bundesarchiv (the National Archive of Germany) at www.bundesarchiv.de. Here I discovered that there were several archival components, one of which was the Military Archive located in Freiburg and having its own website at www.bundesarchiv.de/aufgaben_organisation/abteilungen/ma/index.html.

Upon addressing my interest by email (militaerarchiv@barch.bund.de), I received a prompt reply indicating to their sorrow that all records of individual soldiers of World War I were destroyed by Allied bombing of the Heeresarchiv in Potsdam in 1945. What was I to do now? I turned to the Internet.

I had always assumed that my father had been a casualty of the French forces. My understanding of the circumstances of his field injury on that crucial September date in 1918 was substantially clarified when I investigated relevant websites on the World Wide Web while I was researching the completion of a book on the history of my family. I was astounded to find so much detail regarding the progression of World War I battles, their location and time. Simply entering "Bourlon 1918" into the Google search engine provided me with rich details concerning the very events of the time and place my father had been shot.

The wonders of the Internet for contemporary researchers became apparent. One website suggested that it was Canadian troops who were responsible for my father's injuries by offering the following account:

January, 2015

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

It was found that the Bosche had taken up a defensive line on the eastern side of the Canal du Nord and so we were compelled to establish our line on the western bank, as all bridges over the canal had been destroyed . . . On the night of the 25th [September, 1918] a move forward was made to the concentration area around Bullocourt, where the Battalion was scattered over the old battlefield in shell holes, dugouts, etc. The Battalion moved forward to their assembly area in the old Hindenburg line just west of Inchy en Artois . . .

The 11th Brigade had been given the task of capturing Bourlon Wood after the 10th Brigade had got across the canal, and at zero hour, 5:20 A.M. on the 27th of September, commenced to move forward, the 102nd Battalion leading, followed by the 87th, 54th and 75th Battalions.

The task of this Battalion [the 54th] was to get around the north side of Bourlon Wood and capture the northern and eastern portion of the wood . . . Bourlon Wood was on high commanding ground and it was vital that this ground should be in our hands before the 3rd Army commenced their attack. Accordingly it was arranged that the 54th Battalion, on capturing the eastern side of the wood, was to send up a star rocket to signify that this high ground was taken.

The Canal du Nord was crossed without casualties and the Battalion jumped off without delay, and after stiff fighting managed to establish themselves on the eastern side of the wood, sending up the signal that the wood was captured.

By other accounts, 27 September 1918 was a pivotal day that turned the tide of the war in favor of the Allies who broke through the Hindenburg (a.k.a. Siegfried) Line and subsequently took Cambrai. These battles precipitated the end of the war on 11 November 1918.

(A map) shows the location of Bapaume, Bourlon and Cambrai. (There is a) detailed map of the 4th Division's attack on Bourlon . . . including the advancing 87th Battalion positions varying from 8:20 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on that fateful September day. My father must have been shot in the woods, perhaps just north of where the word "Oak" appears on the map.

My father's apparent fate caused a needless shock to his family. Immediately after the regiment's retreat from the battlefield where my father had been shot, his well-meaning battery commander, in his zeal to inform families of battlefield victims, wrote the following letter of condolence to my grandfather:

In the battlefield, Sept. 29, 1918

Dear Mr. Frank. [addressed to Julius Frank, father of Arthur Frank]

As the current Battery Commander of the 6th Field Battery, 76th Regiment, I must, with deepest sadness, inform you of the news that your dear son Arthur died a hero's death for the Fatherland on Sep 27. A shot in the neck was the cause of death. Unfortunately, it was not possible to retrieve his mortal remains, and so Arthur lies buried in the same town in which his early death came about.

Since his time in the Battery, Arthur and I have been close friends, and he was a likeable, good comrade with

whom I shared both sorrow and joy. His commanders all were satisfied with his performance as was I, which should be clear from the fact that he had been recommended for the E.K. I Klasse and would have become an officer on the next occasion. I discussed both of these matters with him two days before his death, so at least he was still able to enjoy these prospects. Unfortunately, fate would have it that he would not live to achieve either.

Arthur was a model, capable, conscientious and energetic Vizewachmeister. To me he was not only a well-thought-of comrade, but he also was a dear and trustworthy friend. I had the good fortune to have been together with him since

May 15, except for short breaks, during which time I learned to like and respect him.

Arthur Frank will forever be remembered by myself and the entire Battery, honoring his memory.

Since I share the great sorrow with the caring father, the beloved mother, and the rest of the family, I send you my deepest sympathy.

Yours,

(Signed) Eberle

Art. F. R. und Batterieführer

My family in Eppingen was devastated by this news, grieving in deep sorrow. What terrible pain Julius and his wife Sophie Frank must have felt, realizing that the war was rapidly coming to an end and their son was never to return home again. Fortunately, they were soon informed of the grave error and that

Arthur, my father, was recovering in a field hospital.

The Frank family held a happy “second birth” party upon the return of their son to Eppingen.

The loyalty to Germany shown by young Jewish men on the battlefields of World War I did not grant them any special consideration from the Nazis some fifteen years later. At first, as the Nazis undertook their mounting program of hate against Jews, it was thought that those who had served and shed their blood for the Fatherland would be respected. Indeed, some were actually singled out for

so-called special handling by being sent to the concentration camp at Theresienstadt. In the end, of course, all Jews were given equal treatment with respect to the “final solution.” No matter what their contribution to German society may have been, Jews were despised, disenfranchised and ultimately destined to the death camps.

Fortunately, my father had the wisdom to save our family by our relatively early immigration to the U.S.A. in 1937. Perhaps this warrants my father with yet another re-birth, the miracle of survival from the tyranny of the Holocaust and the gift of a third life.

JGSCV Meeting Dates Through August, 2015* **At Temple Adat Elohim**

January 4, 2015 Sunday 1:30-3:30-PM PM Stuart Tower, author of “BRANKO” will describe his book and how it offers insights into migration from the German controlled Soviet Union to the U.S. The book will be available for purchase

2015

February 15 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 Sunday 1:30-3:30 Megan Lewis, Reference Librarian, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Annual Yom Hashoah Program

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

June 7 Sunday 1:30-3:30 TBA

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

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

JGSCV Welcomes New Members

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