

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 4, Issue 4

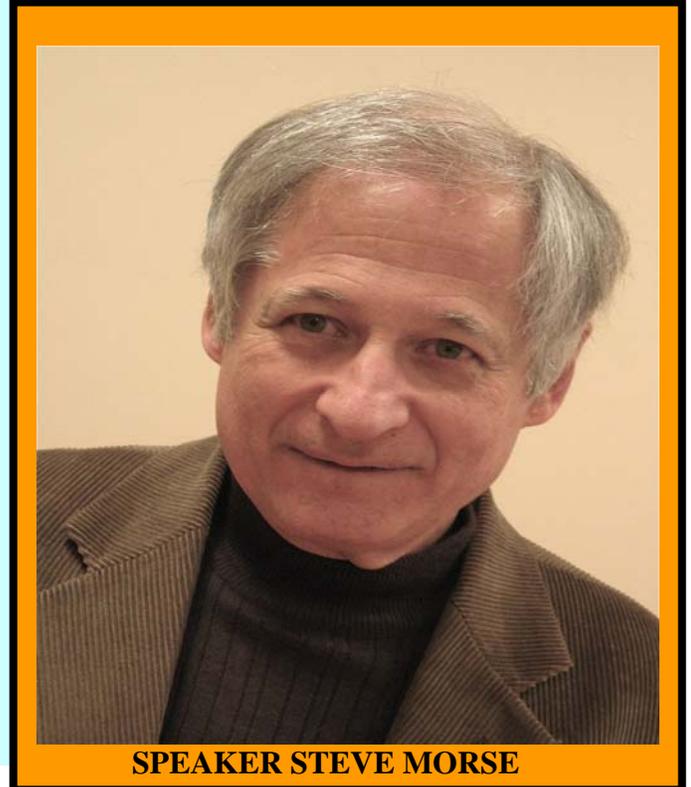
January 2009

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Over seventy people were informed by the incomparable Steve Morse at JGSCV's December meeting and Chanukah party! Steve gave an amusing, detailed account of the 150 plus portals on his website [www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org). The presentation covered Ellis Island, census records, birth dates, calendars, genetic genealogy, bidding on-eBay and more! For any genealogist this website is a great helping tool. There is a summary of this lecture on Steve's website [www.stevemorse.org/onestep/onestep.htm](http://www.stevemorse.org/onestep/onestep.htm) under "about this website"

Thirteen of our "2009" members received Chanukah gifts as part of our annual membership renewal drive. Prizes ranged from a World Deluxe Subscription to Ancestry.com, two subscriptions to Footnote.com, 2009 Family Tree Maker Software, a CD of Family Tree Magazine archives, a Klezmer music CD and a variety of books ranging from an Official Guide to Ancestry.com to *The Lost* by Daniel Mendelsohn and *Capturing Memories Family Photographs* by Maureen Taylor and more.

Many thanks to Ancestry.com, Footnote.com and Family Tree Magazine for donating many of the prizes to help with our membership renewal drive!



**SPEAKER STEVE MORSE**

Hal Bookbinder conducted the JGSCV Board election. The slate of five board members was accepted by acclimation. Elected to the board for 2-year terms were: Debra Kay Blatt, Werner Frank, Fred Land, Helene Rosen and Sharon Rosenthal. Following the by-laws, the Board determines their assignments at the January Board meeting. A By-Laws change was approved by the membership. "Any member of the board of directors may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board of Directors or the President of the Society. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or any later date specified therein. The acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective."

If you have not yet renewed your membership or joined JGSCV please print or download a membership form from our website: [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) and submit it as directed. The more members we have the stronger the society.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors, have a Happy Chanukah and happy, healthy, and safe New Year!

Jan Meisels Allen

## FROM WARREN BLATT, managing director of JewishGen:

If someone signs up for an Ancestry.com subscription or buys any Ancestry.com product (e.g.: books, Family Tree Maker software) via JewishGen, then JewishGen receives a commission from Ancestry.com. There is no price difference to the end customer. In order for JewishGen to receive this benefit, all you have to do is visit Ancestry.com via the JewishGen home page at <http://www.jewishgen.org> and use the "Search Ancestry.com" box in the upper right. The Ancestry website will then set a "cookie" in your browser, indicating that you arrived there via JewishGen. Then anything that you purchase in the next 120 days will be credited to JewishGen.

**SEE PAGE 3 FOR MEETING NOTICES**

## ABOUT JGSCV.....

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County meets once a month, usually on a Sunday. Meetings are oriented to the needs of the novice as well as the more experienced genealogist. Members share materials, research methods and ideas, as well as research success or failures. Members have access to the JGSCV library located on a special shelf at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter which is circulated by email.

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

## NARA Has Online Immigration Indexes

Many years ago books were published that were indexes to passenger arrivals during portions of the 19th century from Germany, Ireland, Italy and Russia. The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) now has these indexes on the Internet. They are:

Germans to America 1850–1897  
Irish (Famine) 1846–1851  
Italians to America 1855–1900  
Russians to America 1834–1897

The databases are located at <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=GP44>.

Data about each immigrant includes name, age and destination, plus a Manifest Identification Number. You must then click the link to Manifest Header Data File in order to retrieve additional information. A solution is to open up two pages (tabs) of the browser, both pointing to the above URL. One can be used to retrieve the data about the passenger and the second to retrieve the ship's data.

The definition of "German," "Irish," "Italian" and "Russian" is not ethnicity but country of origin. Thus a Russian who came to the U.S. from England and listed his country of origin as "England" is not in the Russians to America database.

NARA has other databases online that they consider of interest to genealogists. They can be linked to at <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/index.jsp> under "Genealogy/Personal History."

(Contribution from the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Broward County)

## GENEALOGY RECORDS AND INDEXES ON THE INTERNET

Thanks to the Genealogy Roots Blog, here is a compiled list of links to many useful online directories of U.S. genealogy indexes and records.

### Cemeteries, Obituaries and Vital Records

- [Online Death Indexes, Death Certificates, Obituaries and Cemetery Burial Records](#)
- [Online Birth and Marriage Records Indexes](#)

### Census Records

- [Some Free Online Census Records Indexes](#)
- [State Census Records](#) (includes links to some online indexes)

### County Histories and Biographies

- [Online County Histories, Biographies and Indexes](#)

### Immigration Records

- [What Passenger Lists are Online?](#)
- [Online Naturalization Records and Indexes](#)

### Military Records

- [Online Military Indexes, Records and Rosters of Soldiers](#)

### Newspapers (Historical)

- [Directory of Historical Newspapers on the Internet](#)

## LANGUAGE TRANSLATION

Have you ever wished you could translate a web page in a foreign language by one mouse click?. Well, thanks to today's technology. it is easily done. Go to:, scroll down to <http://tinyurl.com/6bhfh1>, "Get 1-click translations from your browser's toolbar" and select a language button that you want the foreign pages translated into, right click on the selected button and then click on "Add to Favorites." Next time you view a webpage in a foreign language, go to "Favorites" and click on the selected button (in most cases "English") and the foreign pages will be translated. Not all languages are represented, the translations are not perfect nor are all words translated, but it is far better than looking at a page where one does not understand one word.

(Thanks to Frank Eisinger, Saint James, NY)

## JEWISH COLLECTION AT ANCESTRY.COM

The extensive Jewish Family History Collection, a free service accessing databases of JewishGen and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, is now available at: [www.ancestry.com/Jewishfamilyhistory](http://www.ancestry.com/Jewishfamilyhistory)



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

The JGSCV will hold a general meeting on **Sunday**, January 4, 2009 at  
Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks,  
**1:30-3:30 PM**

## "The Musical 'Chicago' and All That Genealogical Jazz"

The true story behind the musical Chicago is the subject of this presentation. Ron Arons tells the true story of Belva Gaertner, one of the two real-life women who were convicted of murdering their lovers in Chicago in 1924. Speaker, Ron Arons has done this by collecting as many genealogical documents as possible and stitched them together to understand this story. And what an amazing story it is! Belva wasn't Jewish but, by understanding what Ron has done, you can replicate the process with your relatives. This is another way of conducting family history research, above and beyond simply collecting relatives' names, dates, and places.

**Speaker:** Ron Arons, a founding member of JGSCV and an accomplished, nationally known speaker. Ron appeared on the PBS television series *The Jewish Americans* in January, 2008. His book, *The Jews of Sing Sing*, was published in June, 2008. He will provide an entertaining, yet educational discussion.

**Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim**

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

For more information contact [information@JGSCV.org](mailto:information@JGSCV.org)

See: [www.JGSCV.org](http://www.JGSCV.org) or call Jan Meisels Allen @ 818-889-6616

### Future JGSCV Meeting Dates

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

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| February 8, 2009 (Sunday at 1:30 PM): | Arthur Benveniste speaking on "Secret Jews: History and Culture of Crypto-Jews"                             |
| March 1, 2009 (Sunday at 1:30 PM):    | Sonia & David Hoffman speaking on "Town Wide Research: Recreating Our Ancestral Shtetl- Ariogala, Lithuania |
| April 5, 2009 (Sunday 1:00-5:00 PM):  | Exclusive Assisted Research Afternoon at the LA Regional Family History Center                              |

## IAJGS Board Members Visit The Generations Network

Jan Meisels Allen

On November 5, 2008, six members of the IAJGS Board of Directors were invited for a tour of the The Generation Network [TGN] headquarters (the parent organization of Ancestry.com, Family Tree Maker, Rootsweb etc.), and to watch the "webinar" broadcast on Jewish records. The six members were early arrivals in Salt Lake City for their board meeting of which I am privileged to serve.

In late October, Ancestry.com launched the Jewish Family History collection ([www.ancestry.com/jewishfamilyhistory](http://www.ancestry.com/jewishfamilyhistory)) which includes many of the JewishGen databases, and also data from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (AJJDC). This is the first time any of the AJJDC records were digitized, as previously the records were only accessible using microfilm. The combined databases comprise nearly 26 million records of Jews that can be searched by Ancestry's technology. Additional Jewish databases are forthcoming, but TGN could not discuss which they will be, as negotiations are still ongoing.



Members of the Board (lower from r to l) Jan Meisels Allen, Joel Spector, Sally Israel ( wife of board member Bill Israel), Anne Feder Lee, Kahlile Mehr, (upper from r to l) Bill Israel, Hal Bookbinder  
[photo by Bill Israel]

By entering Ancestry.com through the Jewish Family History portal, search mechanisms are automatically performed employing the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex system that greatly enhances the possibilities of finding one's ancestors by the Eastern European sound of the name. Ancestry.com recognizes that not all Jews came from Eastern Europe and the portal has links to other countries/geographic areas as well: including North America, Europe, and the Holocaust. Other Ancestry.com databases, which include the same names being searched are also included in the search results (such as census and ships manifests). In order to view the actual records from the Ancestry premium collections records, a paid subscription to Ancestry.com is required. However, millions of records remain freely accessible to the public.

In the short period of time between the launch and our IAJGS visit the site had 90,000 "hits" to the Jewish Family History launch page and 9,000 people subscribed/registered- with many opting to subscribe to Ancestry.com. (See page 1 for information on how JewishGen benefits for new subscriptions to Ancestry if accessed through the Ancestry.com logo on the JewishGen.org site. (<http://www.jewishgen.org> , and use the "Search Ancestry.com" box in the upper right.)

The Jewish Family records webinar (a seminar that takes place on the web) was moderated by Gary Mokotoff, publisher, *Avotaynu* and Michael Daniels of TGN (Michael has since left TGN) having over 1,300 people registered for the webinar of which 40% subscribed to JewishGen and 93% stated they had Jewish ancestry. The webinar took examples of both Gary's and Michael's families and took the listeners through the website pages, teaching them about the rich resources available and how to navigate the Jewish Family History portal. You can access the webinar at: <http://learn.ancestry.com/LearnMore/Webinars.aspx> and click on the November 5 Jewish Family History webinar. You must register (free) to access the webinar.

The tour of TGN headquarters was fascinating! There is a large amount of security in the headquarters as genealogy is a competitive business! We saw how delicate and older books were scanned, preserving their fragile nature with mechanical arms turning pages, cameras taking photographs from overhead and dual scanners working on both sides of a page simultaneously. We also saw the results of some dynamic algorithm programming, making hard to read, dark microfilm copies of documents into records that are easily read. The processes that TGN employs has a 99.9% proof character recognition — quite a feat! A TGN project currently underway capturing old U.S. yearbooks. That information is placed into a database on the Ancestry.com site under US School Yearbooks.

Having visited the TGN I have a better appreciation of the all the resources that go into the creation of their vast databases and maintenance of their computer based systems. I am looking forward to accessing additional Jewish databases becoming available on Ancestry.com's Jewish Family History portal!

## UPDATE ON UK AND IRISH 1911 CENSUS

ENGLAND and WALES: a census is conducted every 10 years. There is a long-standing rule that census information may not be released in less than 100 years. However, there was an appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office several years ago referring to the 2000 Freedom of Information Act. An opinion was rendered in December 2006. The full opinion may be read at: <http://tinyurl.com/57h9js>. While the information Commissioner found for the complainant, it did not mean the entire 1911 census would be released prior to the 100 year rule or 2011. However the Information Commissioner's decision means that The National Archives must supply some information from the 1911 Census in response to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. Under the Freedom of Information Act, The National Archives will respond to individual requests for some information from the 1911 census through their existing paid search service. Each search will incur a £45 per address search, successful or not. For on-line application and more information go to: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census/)

In response to public demand The National Archives is developing an online 1911 Census service, covering most parts of the census, with its external partner, FindMyPast.com. Go to [www.1911census.co.uk/](http://www.1911census.co.uk/) for information and place to register for updates. This will provide for most fields of the Census access by researchers anywhere in the world to download digital scans of images from the census. As with The National Archives current online census services it will be both address and name searchable. It is anticipated that it will be available from 2009. The full 1911 census won't be released until 2012.

For the first time, the original householder schedules that have survived will be posted, so we can see our ancestors' own handwriting, complete with any additional comments that they might have made. The 1911 census will have more information than previous censuses. Information recorded for each person: name and surname, relationship to head of family, age and sex, marital condition, profession or occupation, birthplace, and nationality. Infirmities (eg. deaf, dumb, blind, etc.) will not be released until the census is opened in January 2012. At the request of the Information Commissioner these details have been obscured in the images that are made available prior to that date. Details recorded for married women: years married and children born to present marriage, living or deceased.

IRELAND: For the 1901 and 1911 Ireland Censuses, part of the 1911 census is already digitized and available on-line at no charge. The National Archives of Ireland has established a research partnership with Library and Archives Canada to facilitate digitization, indexing and contextualization of their 1901 and 1911 census records. The returns for 1901 and 1911 are arranged by town land (the smallest division of land) or, in urban areas, by street. The 1901 census lists for each member of a household: name, age, sex, relationship to head of the household, religion, occupation, marital status and county or country of birth. The census also records an individual's ability to read or write and ability to speak the Irish language. All of this information is given on Form A of the census, which was filled in and signed by the head of each household. Where the head of the household could not write, his or her mark, usually an X, was recorded and witnessed by the enumerator. The same information was recorded in the 1911 census, with one significant addition: married women were required to state the number of years they had been married, the number of their children born alive and the number still living. The first phase of the website launched in December 2007 included Dublin City and County for 1911, providing images, databases and contextual material. 1911 has been prepared first because the film is better quality than 1901, and they will initially focus on urban areas because of the present difficulty of finding one's ancestors in cities without a precise address. To search the website or find out more about the census go to: [www.census.nationalarchives.ie/about/index.html](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/about/index.html)

SCOTLAND: Scotland has a separate National Archives from that of England and Wales. The following is from Scotland'sPeople, the official government source of genealogical data for Scotland [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/). Scotland'sPeople is a partnership between General Register Office for Scotland, the National Archives of Scotland and the Court of the Lord Lyon. The legal position in Scotland is different from that of the rest of the UK. Scotland's freedom of information legislation enshrines the traditional 100 year closure - and the Registrar General for Scotland is keen to keep to that, because a departure from it would call into question the modern-day promises of confidentiality which Registrar Generals give to people filling in their Census forms. The current plan by General Register Office of Scotland (GROS) is to release the 1911 Census in 2011, just after its 100th birthday.

Jan Meisels Allen

### REMINDER TO REGISTER

Ralphs Community Contribution Program will support JGSCV through your purchases of goods at Ralphs markets, and at no cost to you. Please register for this community outreach program by using our identification code: 84732. Ralphs has updated it's website and community contribution program. The new website also saves you money with discounts and coupons. The step-by-step procedure to enroll is outlined on our website: [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) and click on "notices."

Now whenever you shop at Ralphs, JGSCV will receive a percentage of what you spend.

## THE STOLPERSTEIN, AN UNUSUAL SOURCE OF GENEALOGICAL INFORMATION

The Stolperstein Project is the conception of Gunter Demnig with goal to memorialize victims of Nazi oppression, be they Jewish or otherwise. This German artist from Cologne, has been the creator and inspiration for placement of *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks) into sidewalk pavements near the once home of a victim. Their obvious presence force passers-by to stop and read the inscription which begins: "Here lived" engraved in brass on the concrete squares measuring about four inches wide with the name, date, and place of death of an individual killed by the Nazis. This basic information about the fate of one person among 6 million has the power to create questions in the minds of pedestrians. For more information see [www.obermayer.us/award/awardees/demnig-eng.htm](http://www.obermayer.us/award/awardees/demnig-eng.htm).

What Demnig began in 1993 is becoming the largest monument to the victims of National Socialism; it is a constantly expanding mosaic. "It is for all the victims," says Demnig, "Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, and resistance fighters." As of 2007, Gunter Demnig had put down more than 13,000 Stolpersteine in more than 280 cities. In Frankfurt alone one can view some of the *Stolpersteine* and also have access to more detailed information about a particular victim at:

[www.stolpersteine-frankfurt.de/downloads/Doku2006\\_1.pdf](http://www.stolpersteine-frankfurt.de/downloads/Doku2006_1.pdf).

This project has expanded beyond the borders of Germany to Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Hungary. For example, the Stolpersteine Project in Austria devoted to Vienna can be viewed at [www.steinedererinnerung.net](http://www.steinedererinnerung.net).



- We welcome new or rejoining members: Jeff Bock, Rachel Elman, Bonnie Gould, Judy Karta , Dr. Ralph and Elaine Starr, Pat and Bill Thomas

## JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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