

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 4, Issue 6

March 2009

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Nearly 100 JGSCV members and meeting attendees experienced a fascinating, erudite and historical presentation by Arthur Benveniste on *Secret Jews: History and Culture of Crypto-Jews and Their Research for Jewish Roots and Identity*. Arthur discussed the impact of the Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal, and later in Brazil and Mexico, on the Jews who lived in those countries. The Inquisition required Jews to leave the country or convert to Catholicism. Many, who converted to Catholicism, maintained some Jewish traditions, albeit hiding them. Until more recent times, these traditions were not recognized by the descendants to be from their Jewish roots. The traditions include playing cards around a table on Friday nights—so that if someone came to the door



SPEAKER ARTHUR BENVENISTE

they could put away their prayer books and looked as if they were playing cards, or consuming certain foods, or lighting 8 candles in paper bags at Christmas time—the 8 being for Chanukah... and more. A recently released DNA study showed that 20 percent of today's Spanish population is of at least partial Jewish descent.

The audience asked very provocative questions and related their family stories. This included one attendee who told of her family in 1938 Germany having to do a family tree going back to 1481 to prove they were Catholic in order to survive. This individual wanted to know where she could research prior to 1481 to see if her family had been Jewish. (Arthur referred her to certain Archives in Spain.) [1481 was the year a Spanish Inquisitor was murdered and the converted Jews were blamed.] Others related that their family made certain foods, such as "bourmules" <Crypto Jewish potato or flour deep fried> or in Spanish today "banuleos" a special tortilla, indicating a tradition long-passed down through the generations.

I hope you have renewed your membership—see page 2 for a reference where you may obtain a membership form. We understand that the economy is hurting, and you may have to curtail certain expenses. The \$25 per year for 10 meetings is a bargain for education, socialization and meeting new friends with the same interest in genealogy!

Our annual exclusive research assisted afternoon at the Los Angeles Regional Family History Center (LARFHC) is coming up April 5 and only current dues-paid members may attend and get assistance with their personal genealogy from experienced JGSCV members and LARFHC volunteers. The LARFHC will be undergoing renovations shortly following our meeting, and will be closed for 5-6 months.

Don't forget our March 1 meeting with Sonia and David Hoffman about *Town-Wide Research, Bringing Your Shtetl to Life*. This model can be used for recreating any shtetl. (See page 3).

The place to be this summer is Philadelphia, PA for the IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy August 2-7, 2009 Please go to www.philly2009.org to register. See page 5 for more information.

I would like to hear from those who have visited their ancestral shtetls. There are several, including myself, who have done this poignant trip and if there are enough of us, this would be a great meeting to relate the experiences.

Jan Meisels Allen

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 special shelves at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter which is circulated by email.

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

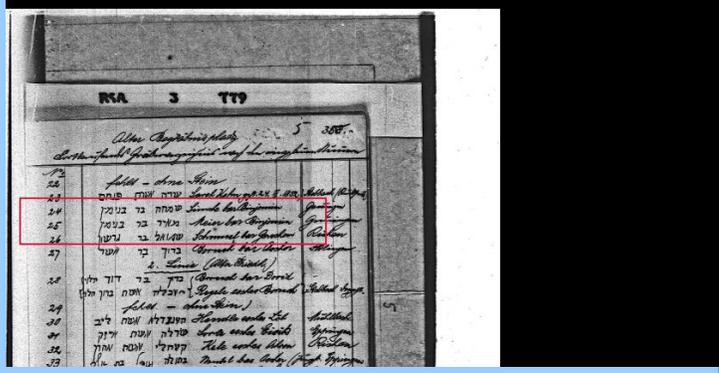
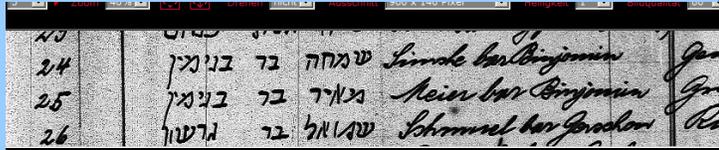
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RECORDS

There exists in the Stuttgart located Hauptstaatsarchiv (State Archives of Baden-Wuerttemberg) handwritten records of metricals associated with Jews as far back as the eighteenth century. These documents are available at the Archives as hard to read photographic reproductions. The Archive has digitized these data and made them freely available on the web site:

<http://tinyurl.com/aufyl7>

The site permits selection of towns from an index of the 26 letters of the alphabet. Upon making such a selection one obtains an alphabetic listing of all towns that satisfy the selection. For each such town, a list of searchable documents is indicated with specific ranges of relevant dates. It is then possible to examine the content of a document invoking user friendly tools. A red bordered selection box can be traversed over the document in order to zoom in and make the writing more readable as shown below.

From Marcelo Rosenbaum



HEBREW DATE CONVERSION

There is a great site, www.kaluach.com, offering a very complete universal Hebrew calendar. It presents the Hebrew date with the Gregorian date in a one-month-to-a-page format, one-click conversion to primary choice, one-click choice of month or year. It is totally adjustable for any longitude or latitude, gives the dates of every festival, minor or major, lists the liturgical hours of the day (e.g. nightfall and the attendant change in the Hebrew date), and gives data on the week's Torah reading, which is often the format [e.g. "3rd day in the week of Ki-Tisa"] for a date for religious data (birth, circumcision, wedding, death, burial) and often for dates in correspondence. It's freeware. If you wish, the owner politely invites you to send a small check as a donation to his synagogue in Israel.

Michael Bernet, New York

ELLIS ISLAND RECORDS REVEALED

The February 2009 issue of *Venturing Into Our Past* included a brief note that Marian Smith had placed on her blog about missing manifests from Ellis Island. In response to further inquiries, Marian has clarified that Ellis Island manifests (1897-1903) were not split, and First and Second Class cabin lists were not lost, nor destroyed. What happened to them? Marian has answered this question in a new paper entitled "More on Missing (Cabin) Manifests". In addition to answering the question, Marian's paper gives an excellent overview of the process on how passenger lists were handled by the Immigrant Service. The paper may be read at www.mariansmith.com

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NEEDS

The National Park Service (NPS), Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area has asked JGSCV if we have or any of our members have or know of any documents, papers, letters, books about Jews or Jewish homesteading in the Conejo Valley and Santa Monica Mountain region. The National Park Service is starting an ethnographic research project and would be interested in obtaining copies of such materials so they can be looked at as a resource for those researching the area. If anyone has any such documents, please contact me (president@jgscv.org) and I will put you in contact with the appropriate NPS staff.

FRANKFURT MEMORBUCH

The National Library of Israel, David and Fela Shapell Family Digitization Project announced the availability of a digitized version of the Frankfurt Memorbuch, one of the most important sources of genealogical data on German Jewry. See

http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/mss/heb1092/index_eng.html



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

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

Town-Wide Research: Bringing Your Shtetl to Life

The Ariogala Research Group has been able to "re-create" the life of their ancestral shtetl in Lithuania, typical of eastern European villages, whose centuries of Jewish life were destroyed in the Holocaust. This presentation provides methods for you to paint a rich picture of your ancestral town. Using a variety of sources and documents from 1765 to 1940, the history and life of typical Lithuanian town will be described. Though the focus will be on Ariogala, Lithuania, this approach can be applied to hundreds of Eastern European shtetls. Dozens of types of records, maps, photographs, and memorabilia obtained from archives, museums, survivors, descendents, personal visits, newspapers, and current residents will be presented, to illustrate how to bring your shtetl to life.

Speakers: David B. Hoffman, Ph.D. organized the Ariogala Research Group. He is the President of the Litvak Special Interest Group and the Jewish Family History Foundation, and serves on the Board of JGSLA as Editor of its journal, *Roots-Key*. Sonia Hoffman is Past President of JGSLA and coordinates the Grand Duchy Project of the Jewish Family History Foundation.

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim

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

For more information contact information@JGSCV.org

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

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates

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

April 5, 2009: Assisted Research Afternoon at the Los Angeles Regional Family History Center
(1:00-5:00 P.M.)

May 3, 2009: "The World Was Ours: The Jewish Legacy of Vilna" A documentary film dedicated to Jewish Vilna in recognition of the annual observance of Holocaust Memorial Day.

June 7, 2009: To be announced

ADVANCED GOOGLING FOR GENEALOGISTS

At the recent IAJGS conference in Chicago, Matthew H. Marx (mhmarx@alum.mit.edu) presented a useful lecture on using GOOGLE to further one's genealogical research. He noted that there is a ten word limit on searches. The order of words matters! Putting *genealogy Jewish* yields different results than *Jewish genealogy*. And singular differs from plural. Google uses no punctuation. It has filters so there is no need to put AND, but you do need OR.

For example: typing— “Michael Marx” genealogy— yields 218 results. Adding the word Lexington yielded 32 results. Adding Kentucky yielded 3 results. Here are his suggestions regarding basic searches:

- Jewish genealogy returns results with the words Jewish and genealogy.
- “Jewish genealogy” returns results with this exact phrase
- Archives France OR Germany returns results about archives in either country
- Archives Germany - Berlin returns results which leave out archives in Berlin
- Stop words such as: and, in, of, the, for, from, about, etc. are ignored by Google (so omit these in searches)
- Using a + sign before a word forces Google to include the word in the search

He also discussed syntax, the key to focused searches:

Inurl: JewishGen	finds ONLY results with JewishGen in the URL
Intitle: JRI-Poland	finds ONLY results with JRI-Poland as part of title
Related: www.JewishGen.org	finds ONLY results with content similar to JewishGen
Site: www.Familytreemagazine.com	finds ONLY results within specified site
Site: domain	finds ONLY results in specified domain (e.g. gov)
Filetype: PDF	finds ONLY results of specified file type (e.g. PDF)
Link: www.jgsgb.org	finds ONLY results pages that include link to JGSGB (This useful to find out what other sites are trying to link to that site)
Date:	finds ONLY results limited to specified date or range
#...#:	finds ONLY results within given range of #s
Safesearch:	finds ONLY results without “adult” content
Intext: search term	ignores titles, URLs, links
Inanchor:	finds text behind buttons and icons (will yield hidden email address)
Info: URL	finds info about this site
Similar symbol (symbol on top, to the left of the 1 key)	searches for specified term & synonyms (e.g. car, automobile)
A*B	finds search terms A & B separated by one or more words

Syntax for Google Groups:

Group:	finds ONLY results for specified group
Author:	finds ONLY results for group messages from specified author
Insubject:	finds ONLY results with specified term in message subject

Specialized Information Operators:

Define: term	will return variety of sources defining term
Phonebook	will return phone # for named search
Rphonebook	will return only residential phone #s
Bphonebook	will return only business listings
Weather:	type weather and follow by entering the city or zip code. Hitting enter will give 5 day weather forecast.

For more information see Google's help page at www.google.com/help/cheatsheet.html and for more Google tips check www.googleguide.com Individual preferences can be set by going to the “preference box” where it is possible to select language (e.g. English) and you can exclude foreign languages. You can set the number of results per page, default being 10.

You can ask a question. If you type, Germany has * federal states, Google treats * as a question. You can use translation tools. On the left hand Google tool bar, click more. Then go to Communicate, Show and Share, click link to Translate. Insert in URL, the words you wish to translate, then click language from list of languages. Yiddish is not available; Hebrew is.

Rochelle Kaplan Utah JGS Newsletter, Atsmi Uvsari, Issue #20.

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies

And

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Philadelphia

Are proud to co-host the



SHERATON CITY CENTER HOTEL-PHILADELPHIA

How-to Genealogy & Family History Sessions, newcomer to expert
Computer classes, beginner to advances
Research Resource Room on-site
Jewish Films
Archivists from different countries
Tours of Jewish Philadelphia
Philadelphia historical sights
& much more...

To register and find out more, please go to:

www.philly2009.org

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies has announced that registration is now open for the 29th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be held in Philadelphia from August 2-7. It is also possible to make hotel reservations at this time from the conference site at <http://www.philly2009.org>.

Conference registration rates are:

- Early Bird Registration (through April 30, 2009): Full-\$250; Companion-\$150
- Regular Registration (May 1-July 24, 2009: Full-\$295; Companion-\$195
- On-Site Registration (after July 25, 2009: Full-\$325; Companion \$225.
- Daily Registration: Sunday (including Opening Reception: \$95; Monday-Thursday; \$75 per day; Friday morning: \$40.

To be eligible for companion registration, both parties must reside in the same household.

UPDATE REPORT FROM THE CEMETERY COMMITTEE

More than 440 individual graves at the Conejo Mountain Cemetery in Camarillo, CA were photographed and the headstone information submitted to JewishGen for general availability. Two JGSCV volunteers, Helene Rosen and Carole Webber, visited the cemetery, noted the location of the Jewish graves, and photographed each one. They then transcribed all the pertinent information onto spreadsheets that were submitted to JewishGen. Thanks to their efforts, another step has been taken in making local cemetery information available to researchers worldwide. This is the second Ventura County cemetery that JGSCV volunteers have documented as part of JewishGen On-line Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR). Previously they documented Ivy Lawn Cemetery in Ventura.

Sample headstones are shown below:



- We welcome new members: Levinia and Martin Hutner, Erica and Jerry Miller, Dorothy Wolfe

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jan Meisels Allen, President

president@jgscv.org

Stewart Bernstein, Member-at-large

stewart@jgscv.org

Warren Blatt, Member Education

education@jgscv.org

Debra Kay Blatt, Information Chairman

information@jgscv.org

Dorothy Drilich, Secretary

secretary@jgscv.org

Werner Frank, Newsletter Editor

newslettereditor@jgscv.org

Fred Land, Treasurer

treasurer@jgscv.org

Helene Rosen, Membership

membership@jgscv.org

Sharon Rosenthal, Member-at-large sharon@jgscv.org

Raya Sagi, Librarian: librarian@jgscv.org

Frank Tessel, Cemetery Project: frank@jgscv.org

Mailing address: 6052 Hackers Lane, Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Phone: 818-889-6616

Website: www.jgscv.org

David Oseas, Webmaster: webmaster@jgscv.org