



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 5, Issue 8

May, 2010

President's Letter:

JGSCV commemorated Yom Hashoah Day (Holocaust Memorial Day) with viewing the very moving National Geographic Channel documentary, *Hitler's Hidden Holocaust*. The documentary tells the story of the *Einsatzgruppen* (German word meaning action-groups) an organized killing machine, roaming through Poland, Ukraine and Belarus, murdering an estimated 1.5 million Jews and partisans, prior to the birth of concentration camps. Featured on the documentary were actual footage of some of the actions as well as Father Patrick Desbois author of *Holocaust by Bullets*, (his story of discovering mass gravesites of Jews exterminated in the Ukraine) and others.

Following the documentary Bob Rich, American Red Cross-Ventura County Chapter talked about the Red Cross Holocaust Tracing Service-the largest tracing service in the world. Only the barest of information is necessary to start a Trace: first and last/maiden name, country of birth, last known country of residence, date of birth within a 10-year span. Those who submitted requests prior to 1990 should resubmit the request due to additional sources of information becoming available. The American Red Cross works with many archives and museums in Europe in working a trace. The tracing service is free of charge. For more information see; www.ARCventura.org or call 1-805-987-1514 x318.

Len Shenkin gave the book report on *Tough Jews: Fathers, Sons and Gangster Dreams*, by Rich Cohen. The book is from our own traveling library. Len related about the Jewish gangsters from Eastern Europe as well as in New York including the Catskills. If you are a 2010 dues-paid member, you may be able to borrow certain of our traveling library books (which is otherwise non-circulating) for the book report- a new benefit of membership. If you would like to participate in our new book review program please contact me at president@jgscv.org for more information. Non-members may also participate by reporting on their own or a public library genealogically relevant book. All books selected for the book review need to be prior approved.

Warren Blatt facilitated the schmoozing corner where you can discuss your brick wall or latest genealogical find. Remember to come to the meetings 15 minutes in advance to take advantage of this new feature.

If you have not yet renewed your membership or joined JGSCV, please go to our website: www.jgscv.org to print or download a membership form and complete and submit it. We really want **you** as members! The more members we have the stronger the society.

The May 2 meeting is **YOUR** meeting—"Genealogy in the Round: Share Your Successes, Failures, Artifacts and Brick Walls". If you wish to participate (5-10 minutes per person), please let me know and tell me which subject you are going to present. To make this meeting successful we need you- members and friends to participate...it's a great opportunity to receive suggestions from your fellow genealogists on breaking down your brick walls.

The Traveling Library Books Classification A and B will be at the April meeting. See our website under library traveling for the list of books in these categories.

Looking forward to seeing you on May 2nd!

Jan Meisels Allen



ABOUT JGSCV.....

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

2010 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 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain the new/renewal membership form on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

MORE CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

- ***FOOTNOTE EXTENDS FREE CENSUS RECORDS THROUGH APRIL***

Footnote will continue to allow free access to its U.S. census database through April, 2010. A free account is required and may be obtained at www.footnote.com/census.

- ***1880 SPECIAL CENSUS ON ANCESTRY.COM***

The 1880 special census schedules of "defective, dependent and delinquent" classes (also known as DDD schedules) from 14 states are now available on ancestry.com. Records from the following states are available: California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Washington Territory. (Washington did not achieve statehood until 1889.) Access to this data requires a subscription to ancestry.com.

RALPHS COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The Ralphs Community Contribution program helps JGSCV with making contributions to us every quarter, based on the purchases made by participants in the program. Please visit our website www.jgscv.org under "notices" for the easy step-by-step instructions to register and have JGSCV benefit from your Ralphs purchases.

2010 IAJGS CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES

Mark your calendars! July 11-16, 2010 -- the 30th IAJGS Conference will be hosted by JGSLA and held at the JW Marriott Hotel at LA Live near the Staples Center in downtown LA. The JGSLA website is up at: <http://www.jgsla2010.com/> Conference registration is open and hotel reservations can be made now. Program details are available on the website. See which JGSCV members will be making presentations on page 6.

19th CENTURY BRITISH RECORDS

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain has updated its database of Jews in Britain in the mid-19th century. It now has more than 29,000 people, more than 90% of the estimated total Jewish population at that period. Search at: <http://www.jgsgb.org.uk/1851/index.asp>

YAD VASHEM

The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem is making its annual appeal for names to add to its list of Shoah Victims. Individual Pages of Testimony memorialize those who perished in the Holocaust by including their biography and photographs. You may confirm the names of family members at <http://tinyurl.com/5rt63>. On that same page there is a link to submit additional names.

EARLY OREGON ANCESTORS

More than 150,000 entries on people living in Oregon from 1800-1860 is available for free search at <http://tinyurl.com/y9vfv3o> Data has been captured from census, death, probate and other records. Although many native Americans lived in Oregon at that time, few are represented in this database due to lack of records.

SEARCHING NAMES

In February, Eric A. Taub decided to search for a childhood friend he hadn't seen in a generation. He chronicled his efforts in an article titled 'Going Beyond Google to Find a Lost Friend' that was published on March 24th in the New York Times. You can read all about his successes and failures at the New York Times website for free: <http://tinyurl.com/ye5kvmq>



Share Your Genealogical Successes & Failures

Come to the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo
Valley and Ventura County (and surrounding areas)

Sunday, May 2, 2010 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

at Temple Adat Elohim

2420 E.Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

"Genealogy In The Round: Share Your Successes, Failures, Artifacts and Brick Walls"

Come and share a genealogical success, failure, brick wall, or genealogical artifact! This is YOUR meeting—We all learn from one another—take this opportunity to share your genealogical story—success or failure, ask questions about your brick walls, and more!

If you wish to participate in the program, please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@JGSCV.org. Each participant will be given 5-10 minutes to share—depending on the number of presenters. Whether you are a JGSCV member or a potential member—we'd love to hear your genealogical story.

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.

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim

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

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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How Do They Do It? Family History Tips from Professionals

By Ancestry Monthly Update 18 March 2010

Ever wonder how they make all those fantastic finds

You've seen them weekly on the series, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, airing Friday nights this spring on NBC (8/7c). They're the professional genealogists, the ones who seem to have all the answers. In three weeks, they've discovered everything from documents linking actress Sarah Jessica Parker's family to a Salem witch and a will that named Emmitt Smith's formerly enslaved ancestors, to the phone number of a mystery relative who visited Lisa Kudrow's father one time 60+ years ago.

But, says genealogist Natalie Cottrill, who assisted Sarah Jessica Parker on her search for her gold miner ancestor, professionals tackle family history the same way you would. They begin with the known and move back to the unknown.

It's how they move that sometimes make all the difference. And you can do it, too.

Look for Clues

To make the really meaty finds, the kind that get you into an ancestor's story, says Cottrill, you have to go beyond the traditional sources. "There are so many record sources out there to complement census records," says Cottrill. "Handwritten records, family Bibles, city directories, yearbooks, passenger lists, tax and property records: when you use them with the traditional records, you build up more history and background. If we hadn't bothered to look further, we would have never found out that Sarah Jessica Parker's relative was a 49er. And she would have never known what motivated him to go to California."

Most family history-related records hold clues to other documents that will tell you more. A census record may point you to a naturalization document or a passenger list. An early birth index or baptism register could provide you with the ages of children who would appear in a family's U.S. census record – particularly valuable when you consider that 1790, 1800, and 1810, are now searchable at Ancestry.com by certain family characteristics, including by the number of household residents under the age of 16. Even something as straightforward as the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) can lead to a town – date range included – where you might discover a published obituary.

And there are less-expected clues. The 1910 census could point you to other children in the family (mothers were asked to state the number of children they had given birth to and the number of children still living) you should look for. The 1930 census could send you hunting for a previous marriage (the age at first marriage is listed: do a little math and you could discover that part of the happy couple once coupled with someone else). The newly updated U.S. Public Records Index can show you when a family changed residences and hint at possible property records. And a birth index may pay off again by pointing you to town where a family was living when the child was born. If it's the couple's first child, you may find the town the couple was married in as well.

Cottrill also suggests branching out, researching brothers and sisters and other family lines, particularly the easy-to-find ones. "Maybe you have access to all sorts of records about the branch of the family in Ohio, but the rest of the family was in Russia. Start with the Ohio family. You're going to see success faster, feel more comfortable, and fine-tune your research strategies." Plus, the Ohio family and the Russian family met somewhere, so focusing on the easy-to-find line could lead you directly to the hard-to-track family, too.

Gather, Read, Repeat

"You never know what gold you'll find in a document," says Cottrill. "Go back through the documents you've found. Reread them – repeatedly."

Continued on next page

Once you get your facts straight, jot them down on a timeline, and populate the timeline with historical events that happened during your ancestor's life. Look for events in your ancestor's local community (newspapers are a great source for this). Note family events – births, deaths, marriages, property sales, job changes – everything you can find. Then dig in and determine how each of these occurrences may have affected your ancestor and his or her family. Might records exist that could make a more direct connection for you? To answer that question, turn to other researchers.

Tools like Member Connect at Ancestry.com can help you reach out to other family historians who are researching the same family, the same geographic area, or the same surname (you'll find Member Connect links on the right side of most image pages at Ancestry.com). Or search for researchers via the Collaborate tab on Ancestry.com – you can select specific research interests and find other family historians who may have already traveled down the same research path.

Still, on occasion, you'll encounter a research task that you just can't seem to get through. Don't give up, says genealogist Joseph Shumway. "There are few problems that can't be solved. When we, professionals, come up against brick walls, we might reconstruct entire neighborhoods and piece together entire families looking for clues. Sometimes it can help to just let a problem sit for a while and move to another family line. With so many new records becoming available all the time, you might come back to the problem a few months later, search again and find things that weren't there before."

Plus, says Shumway, even do-it-yourselfers can seek assistance from a professional. Services like Expert Connect let you ask questions of professionals (you choose how much you're willing to pay for the answer – and you get to preview all of the answers before deciding which one to accept). You can also use Expert Connect to hire an expert to look up or pick up a document at a courthouse, archive, or the Family History Library. You can find someone to translate a foreign document for you or even look up an obituary or wedding announcement in a small town newspaper.

You May Not Be the Only One ...

In family history, it pays to ask questions. Talk to other researchers, local librarians, and historical and genealogy societies. (Remember those great Salem, Massachusetts, finds in the Sarah Jessica Parker's episode? Those came courtesy of just such a society).

Says genealogist Cottrill, when you're tackling a tough research project, you'll also need to get creative. "Every region is going to have its own set of records, but there are some predictable clues to look for. Marriage records may give you the names of parents. Land records could clue you into other family members or vital records. Property records could lead you to newspaper articles," says Cottrill.

And do your homework – even when the answers are presented to you on an antique, silver platter. "I had a family story that said my ancestors were married in 1800 in England," says Cottrill. "Everyone was stuck on that fact. As I very carefully researched each generation, I realized there was no way they were married in England – they were living in Maine. They were actually married in New England."

"Genealogy done right isn't always easy," Cottrill continues, noting that it would have been simpler to just accept her family's England-wedding story rather than do all of the work to find the couple's wedding on a different continent. But then she would have missed valuable clues that let her take the family line back even further. "People get excited about adding names to their family tree, but it's even more exciting when you do the research carefully. Then you can look at the record and know that you're right." *Who Do You Think You Are?* airs Friday nights (8/7c) on NBC this spring. For more information, visit <http://www.nbc.com/who-do-you-think-you-are>; select **Video** to catch up on any previously aired episodes you may have missed.

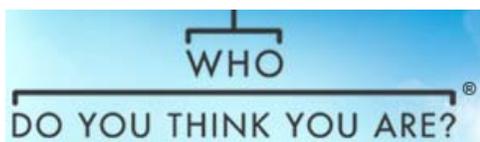
JGSCV
UPDATES . . .

THE SCHMOOZING CORNER was led by JGSCV Board Member Warren Blatt who fielded genealogy questions from JGSCV members like Steven



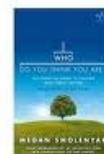
Weinstein and Len Shenkin. Remember, you can find The Schmoozing Corner on the right as you enter the meeting room at Temple Adat Elohim; near the front of the room. Hal Bookbinder, a founding JGSCV member will be available to help with your own specific research issues before the May 2 meeting. The Schmoozing Corner is open for 15 minutes immediately prior to the start of the meeting. Look for the sign.

“Who Do You family history of by NBC. To week.



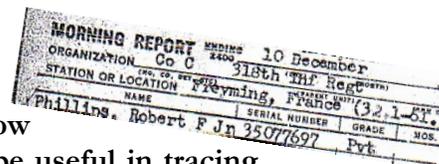
Think You Are?”, the genealogy series that traces the celebrities, has been renewed for the 2010-11 season date, the show is seen by about 6.8 million adults each ‘WDYTYA’ has been a hit even among by improving NBC’s under 50 year old

younger viewers adult audience by 23%. A good sign for genealogists.



At the May 2 meeting, JGSCV Board Member Fred Land will present his book report on the literary companion to the TV series “Who Do You Think You Are”.

Obtaining *MILITARY MORNING REPORTS* was a key element in Steve Luxemberg’s tracing “Annie’s Ghost”, as he described in his presentation to the JGSCV in March. JGSVC members asked Steve to follow up with the detailed steps required to obtain these daily reports that can be useful in tracing military records. His ‘step-by-step’ for retrieving Morning Reports can be found on the next page.



You may not be aware, but several members of the JGSCV will be making presentations at the annual IAJGS Conference July 11-16 at the J.W. Marriott at L.A. Live. Genealogists from around the globe will be seeking insights from Ron Arons, Debra Kay-Blatt, Warren Blatt, Hal Bookbinder, Werner Frank, David Hoffman, Sonia Hoffman and Jan Meisels Allen. We will profile our own experts and a description of their Conference Presentations in this issue and in future issues leading up to the Conference. You can read about Ron Arons and Debra-Kay Blatt on page 9.

Your JGS needs YOU to help with publicity. JGSCV needs a volunteer for the Publicity Committee who can devote about one hour per month to send out meeting notices. The notices are time sensitive so the dedicated hour is specific each month. You must have access to Microsoft Word. Please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@jgscv.org

2010 JGSCV Meeting Dates
 All Meetings are held at Temple Adat Elohim
 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

May 2 Sun. 1:30-3:30 PM

“Genealogy in the Round: Share your Successes, Failures, Artifacts and Brick Walls”

June 6 Sun. 1:30-3:30 PM

Schelly Talalay Dardashti, “Trends and Discoveries in Sephardi and Converso/Mnai Anousim Research”

June 27 Sun. 1:30-4:15 PM

Daniel Horowitz, “Genealogical Resources in Latin America” and “Genealogy Super Search Engine”

August 1 1:30-3:30 PM

Erwin Joos, “One Foot in America, the Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line “

OBTAINING MORNING REPORTS:

A Step-by-Step Approach

From Steve Luxenberg exclusive to the JGSCV



During Steve Luxenberg's talk at our March 7th meeting he noted how he was able to obtain Morning Reports for his father under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Interested JGSCV members asked Steve for more details and his response is reported below.

While many of the US Army and Air Force military records stored in the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) located in St. Louis, Missouri were destroyed by fire in 1973, the morning reports survived. However, authorization to review the Morning Reports, which documents the comings and goings of personnel in a particular unit, is required from the specific military branches. In order to make the request, you need to know the unit(s) the person served in as well as a time frame for service.

The Army, at least in Steve's case, handled it as an FOIA/Privacy request, and there was no delay in acting on his letter requesting authorization. Steve included proof of his relationship to the soldier in question (his dad) as well as a death notice and death certificate. He doesn't know if being the son helped speed the process.

Steve's request was emailed on May 4, 2007. He also phoned (703-428-6497) to make sure that he was doing it correctly. Three days later--on May 7, the Army's Freedom of Information and Privacy Office, in Alexandria, Va., sent him a letter of authorization, allowing him or his designated representative (a researcher he had hired) to review the requested records.

On that same day, the Army FOIA/Privacy office sent a similar letter to the Organizational Records Section of the Records Reconstruction Branch, alerting them to his request and the Army's authorization.

Steve had to ask for a second permission to review the Morning Reports for the unit to which his dad was transferred. That was treated as a separate request. Again, it took only days.

Here are email and postal addresses Steve used to capture his data:

FOIA for US Army: dafoia@conus.army.mil

Postal address for FOIA for US Army:

Department of the Army Freedom of Information and Privacy Division
7701 Telegraph Road Suite 144
Alexandria Virginia 22315-3905

Postal address for National Personnel Records Center:

National Personnel Records Center
Attn: Organizational Records Section Records Reconstruction Branch
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

For more information on military personnel records, including where different branches of service records are stored see the National Archives site at: <http://tinyurl.com/yexv89g>



The 30th IAJGS

International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

Los Angeles, California

11-16 July 2010

Hosted by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles

The New JW Marriott Hotel at L.A. LIVE

Something for all Genealogists –

How-to Sessions for everyone from newcomers to experts
Computer Classes for beginners through advanced
More than 130 speakers and over 250 programs
Jewish Film Festival and Programs on Yiddish theatre,
klezmer music, vaudeville and Hollywood
Day trips to historic LA neighborhoods
And much, much more

To register and learn more visit:

www.jgsla2010.com

The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies has announced that registration is open for the 30th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be held in Los Angeles from July 11-16. It is also possible to make hotel reservations from the conference site <http://www.jgsla2010.com>

Conference Registration Fees are:

- Early Bird Registration (through April 30, 2010): Full-\$265; Companion-\$165
- Regular Registration (May 1-June 30, 2010):-Full-\$310; Companion-\$210
- On-Site Registration: Full-\$340; Companion-\$230
- Daily Registration Sunday (includes keynote and opening reception): \$105; Monday-Thursday \$85 per day; Friday morning \$45

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

JGSCV Presenters at The 30th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy Los Angeles, California July 11-16, 2010

RON ARONS:



- (1) Researching Your Criminal Ancestors,
Sunday July 11, 11:15AM-12:15PM
- (2) Putting the Flesh on the Bones
Tuesday, July 13, 11:00AM-12:15PM

Ron Arons (left, shown speaking to the JGSCV) is a founding member of JGSCV and a well known expert on Jewish genealogy. The subject of his presentation at the February 1, 2010 JGSCV meeting was 'Mapping Madness' where he provided little known insights into how genealogists may use readily available technology sources such as Google to aid in geographic searches.

Ron's latest book, *Wanted! US Criminal Records* is a primer on federal and state criminal records and the methodology to research criminals. It is also the foundation of his IAJGS Program: Researching Your Criminal Ancestors. Ron will discuss not only the various documents available about American criminals, but also where to find them. He is also prepared to offer many suggestions for researching criminals based upon 10+ years of extensive research.

Ron's second program, Putting the Flesh on the Bones, was originally presented to the JGSCV a few years ago and is designed to have genealogists delve into *Why* our ancestors behaved the way they did; rather than the *Who*, *When* and *Where* most often the focus. This process helped Ron push back his family tree an additional four generations and resulted in his finding living relatives he was unaware of.

DEBRA KAY-BLATT:



- (1) Introduction to JewishGen: Computer Workshop for
Beginners - Sunday, July 11, 11:00AM-12:15PM
- (2) Lodz: "The Manchester of Poland", Exploring Records
on the Internet and Beyond - Tuesday, July 13, 3:30 4:45PM

Debra Kay-Blatt is a Board Member and Founding Member of the JGSCV. While searching her family history for more than a decade, she has found time to publish extracts in the Kielce-Radom SIG Journal as well as volunteer for JewishGen, JRI-Poland and the Lodz Area Research Group.

Debra's key insights into JewishGen will benefit IAJGS Conference attendees who sign up for her Introduction to JewishGen: Computer Workshop for Beginners that will identify search functions and useful databases as well as offer an introduction to the ShtetlLinks pages.

Those fortunate enough to attend Debra's second session: Lodz: "The Manchester of Poland", will learn about the many resources available to document the history of Lodz (among the largest of the ghettos) in the 19th century. Debra will cover migration patterns, industry and geography of the region as well as the availability of vital records in Congress Poland. Expect to learn more about JewishGen, JRI-Poland and other online sources like the Holocaust Museum and Lodz Ghetto Museum, as well.