



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 6, Issue 11

August, 2011

President's Letter:

Our July Genealogy in the Round program was fun and a great success with 10 members and friends sharing their successes and brick walls! This annual program gets better with age, and certainly, this year's was the best so far! One theme seemed to prevail in the techniques: JewishGen with second sources being used: FamilyTree DNA and Yad Vashem.

Susan Geiger, Shelly Glasser, Sally Goodman, Sara Hyman, Allan Linderman, Susan McElvany, Len Shenkin, David Oseas, Stephen Weinstein and Tammy Williams-Anderson, each provided intriguing and helpful insights into their genealogy techniques. Details of each presentation begin on page 3.

Marion Werle 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 feature.



Dalya Dektor gave the book report on the novel, *The Mistress of the Art of Death* by Ariana Franklin. In 1170, medieval Cambridge, England four children have been murdered. The crimes are immediately blamed on the town's Jewish community, taken as evidence that Jews sacrifice Christian children in blasphemous ceremonies. What is timely about this book as reported by the BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13855238> is the recent discovery of 17 bodies in a well in Norwich with the skeletons dating back to the 12th or 13th Centuries and DNA evidence shows that five of seven of the skeletons were from a single Jewish family.

Starting with the September meeting instead of the 5-minute book reports, we will have a 5-minute presentation on a genealogy technique. Marion Werle will talk on the importance of going back to review your research and looking at it with a fresh eye. If you would like to participate by discussing a genealogy technique at a future meeting, please contact me by email at: president@jgscv.org.

The JGSCV board has appointed the 2011 Nominations Committee: Hal Bookbinder, Chairman, Sara Hyman, board representative and Sonia Hoffman general membership representative. While the five board members whose terms are expiring this December (Jan Meisels Allen, Stewart Bernstein, Warren Blatt, Dorothy Drilich, and Allan Linderman) have all expressed the will to continue to serve for another 2-year term, we are always interested in **additional** talent. The Nominations Committee will be contacting those members who are eligible to run. The application may be downloaded from the JGSCV website under contact us.

We are not meeting in August due to the 31st IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy hosted by the JGS of Greater Washington. JGSCV's next meeting is on Monday, September 12, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. with Hal Bookbinder on U.S. Immigration and Naturalization.

Hope to see you in DC at the Conference!

Jan Meisels Allen

FUTURE MEETINGS NOTICES PAGES 4, 7

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.

2011 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.

JEWISH GENEALOGY YEARBOOK UPDATED

The Jewish Genealogy Yearbook has been updated to 2011. Edited by JGSCV founding board member Hal Bookbinder, it may be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/6f9n4vh>. Listed are 141 Jewish Genealogy organizations and 52 Jewish Historical Associations – not all of which are members of IAJGS.

HISPANIC PROGRAM AT LA CENTRAL LIBRARY

“Tracking One Family Across the Old Spanish Trail” will be presented by Donie Nelson of the Genealogical Society of Hispanic America on September 17th at 1PM in Meeting Room A. Using a real family as an example, you will learn how to create a timeline to organize facts, observe patterns and achieve breakthroughs in genealogy research. Although not specific to Jewish genealogy, there are clear applications. The LA Central Library is located at 630 W. 5th St. Los Angeles 90071.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES GENEALOGY FAIR HANDOUTS

The National Archives Research Center held its Seventh Annual Genealogy Fair April 20 and 21 in Washington, D.C. Copies of presenters’ handouts are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/3jn97av> You can download 1940 Census Research, Questions and Symbols as well as the Form Template. Also available are guidelines on using footnote.com and ancestry.com as well as insights on how to access many, many other NARA records such as Court Records, Criminal Records, Federal Employee Records. Other data available include Revolutionary War and Civil War Era information and Leavenworth Prison Records and much, more.

FAMILYSEARCH ADDS MORE RECORDS

Records as diverse as U.S. Social Security Death Index and Lima, Peru Civil Registrations (1874-1930) have been updated and/or added to FamilySearch Historical Record Collections. There are sixty-nine updated records of

which 21 are new. You can access these records at <http://tinyurl.com/4odzr28>

VITAL RECORDS FOR SLOVAKIAN TOWNS

Birth, Marriage and Death records for the following Slovakian counties may be accessed online at <http://tinyurl.com/3pm4mzn>: Banska Stiavnica, Bardejov, Dunajska Streda, Galanta, Giraltovce, Humenne, Krupina, Malacky, Myjava, Nove Mesto nad Vahom, Pezinok, Piestany, Presov, Sabinov, Senec, Senica, Skalica, Stara Lubovna, Stropkov, Trencin, Tmava, Vranov nad Toplou, Sala. The records can be found under the heading: “Slovakia Church Books, 1592-1910”.

UPDATED US DEATH RECORDS, CEMETERIES AND OBITUARIES

The [Online Searchable Death Indexes and Records](http://www.familysearch.org) (click above to access) website has updated data for the following states: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, DC, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

ORDER MICROFILM ONLINE

Family History Centers no longer require a personal visit in California in order to complete forms required to obtain microfilm. Now, films can be ordered online although they will still be shipped to FHC’s and affiliate libraries for viewing. See what is available at <http://tinyurl.com/3gl7y5w>.

PRE-HOLOCAUST JEWISH PROPERTY

Project HEART has compiled a searchable database of 1.5 million Holocaust era property records considered to be the largest, publically available single-source database of lost Jewish property assets from the Holocaust era. To view the data go to <http://www.heartwebsite.org>.

FREE LEGACY FAMILYTREE WEBINARS

The following webinars are offered free by Legacy FamilyTree:

- *August 17*, Newspapers for Genealogists: Using GenealogyBank.com to document every day of your ancestors’ lives by Tom Kemp
- *September 14*, Facebook for genealogists by Tom MacEntee
- *September 21*, Researching your Connecticut ancestors by Marion Pierre Louis

All Webinars begin at 11 AM Pacific

You must pre-register at <http://tinyurl.com/6y2cjj5>. If you cannot attend live, each webinar is archived for at least 10 days and may be viewed for free. After that time a CD may be purchased for \$9.95.

The **SCHMOOZING CORNER** July meeting as Board Member offered help and suggestions. You will find an experienced your questions 15 minutes prior to each JGSCV meeting. The **SCHMOOZING CORNER** is on the right in the front as you enter the meeting room at Temple Adat Elohim.



was busy before the Marion Werle (right) facilitator ready to field



NEW RESOURCES FOR YOU AT JGSCV.ORG WEBSITE

Many thanks to JGSCV webmaster David Oseas for adding and categorizing new 'Resources' added to our website. You will now find it easier to locate information sources with active hyperlinks to relevant sites. If you haven't visited the website recently, you will be pleasantly surprised. At <http://jgscv.org> click on Resources and get started.

PICTURES AT THE MEETINGS You may have noticed various JGSCV members photographs at the meetings. These pictures are sometimes posted on our *facebook* page (<http://tinyurl.com/4yqs7bk>) or included in the monthly newsletter. If for any reason, you would prefer NOT to be photographed, please notify the photographer. More information on this subject will be posted at the sign-in desk at each meeting.



JGSCV SPEAKERS AT IAJGS CONFERENCE

Jan Meisels Allen, JGSCV President, Debra Kay-Blatt and Warren Blatt, JGSCV Board Members and Ron Arons and Hal Bookbinder, JGSCV Founding Members will all be speaking at the annual IAJGS Conference in Washington, DC. August 14-19.

Jan Meisels Allen: *Why Records Access is Critical To Your Genealogy; Dynamics Of Innovative Programming*

Debra Kay-Blatt: *Lodz: Manchester of Poland; Introduction to JewishGen: Computer Workshop*

Warren Blatt: *JewishGen 2011*

Ron Arons: *Researching Rascals & Deciphering Family Secrets: Mapping Madness; Beltway Bandits & Kosher Cops*

Hal Bookbinder: *The Changing Borders of Eastern Europe; Why Our Ancestors Left A Nice Place Like The Pale;*

July 17

JGSCV
MEETING!

**WHAT DID YOU MISS IF
YOU DIDN'T ATTEND
GENEALOGY IN THE
ROUND? (see on next page)**

A LOT!



Susan Geiger spoke about finding cousins she had not known about previously through JewishGen (<http://www.jewishgen.org>) and Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com/>). The cousins were confirmed through DNA testing done through FamilyTreeDNA (<http://www.familytreedna.com/default.aspx>). Susan was able to obtain photographs of her paternal great grandparents from her cousins and was able to obtain information from the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey, which is housed in the temple started by her grandparents.



Shelly Glasser related the story of her granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah at Temple Adat Elohim and the holocaust child that was also represented at the Bat Mitzvah. Through JewishGen, JRI-PL and Yad Vashem she was able to find family of the holocaust child living in Israel and both families have now become very close. The Israeli family was able to share a photo of the child who died in the holocaust, which was displayed on the "empty" chair at the Bat Mitzvah.



Sally Goodman related how she first started her genealogical journey in 1997 and obtained guidance from Gerry Weinerman at JGSLA who held tutorials at the then LA Family History Center (<http://www.lafhl.org/>). For this presentation, she focused on her tracing of the family *Neuspiel* where she found "relatives" living around the world. Sally emphasized the need to **talk to everyone and never give up** as she found Neuspiels that others had said would not talk—but did to Sally. Her database has over 200 Neuspiel's in the database and more with surnames that are not Neuspiel's, due to Neuspiel women who married and their children.



Sara Hyman talked on the importance of placing family names on the JewishGen Family Finder (<http://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/>). Her story related to her great grandfather who had siblings and their children, one of whom turned out to be another speaker, Shelly Glasser. Sara and Shelly met at this JGSCV meeting for the first time although they were supposed to meet years previously.



Allan Linderman spoke about the difficulty of tracing female ancestors. Allan could not engage the cemetery to neaten his paternal grandmother's gravesite because her name was not in their digital database. The handwritten records at the cemetery had her name as "Lend England" which allowed him to locate her death certificate under that name. He found that his grandmother was legally separated and found a

marriage license showing that she married a second time less than a year after her first husband died—the second marriage so soon after the first husband died caused concern within the family. The reason the digital database did not show his grandmother's name was that it was filed under her second marriage's surname.



Susan McElvany related how she tried to find her father's original birth certificate, after her father passed away which he had been unsuccessful in obtaining while living—he had been adopted in 1931 in Michigan. The adoptee birth certificate he had, did not have a father's name included as he was born to a single mother. Susan was able to trace the birth mother in the 1930 US census, which said she was born in Michigan. Susan's brother had a DNA test with FamilyTreeDNA -an exact match 37/37 markers were found with a male in New York. As Susan was a descendant of the adoptee and Michigan law only permitted the actual adoptee to obtain the original birth record for an adopted child, the family had to hire legal counsel and go to court, to be granted the family permission to obtain their late-father's original birth certificate. The father's name on the birth certificate was the same surname as the exact DNA match. They upgraded the DNA test to 67 markers, and contacted the New York match who related that he had a similar story. His father had also "fathered" him with a single woman—a different woman than Susan's grandmother. This person was the brother of her late father. Through the NY brother they found there was a half brother of the common grandfather living in Los Angeles. Family medical history became very important as diabetes ran in the family. The importance of DNA matching was emphasized, as without that they would never have found the father's brother.



Len Shenkin talked on how he found two childhood friends by using IAJGS, Steve Morse's website

(<http://www.stevemorse.org/birthday/birthday2.html>) and Zabasearch (<http://www.zabasearch.com/>). The 2010 IAJGS Los Angeles Conference was helpful as he looked at the conference registration and found one of the listed speakers was indeed his childhood friend from the Bronx. Looking for the second childhood friend following the conference, Len looked at Steve Morse's birthday related search engine and then used Zabasearch and was able to determine the same person was now living in Florida. They all met in Los Angeles earlier this year.

David Oseas talked on putting together the pieces for his Klein family by relating the challenges of researching a common name and conflicting information. Documents he was able to obtain to



determine he had the correct person included: the 1920 census, finding an older sister in the 1910 census, World War I draft registration card, where the original town of birth in Hungary was listed: Ujhely- which helped confirm that he had indeed found the correct ancestor. On the marriage certificate of his great-grandfather he found the maiden name of his great-grandmother and was able to tie that with other documents, confirming he had the correct person.



Stephen Weinstein used an excel sheet to depict parts of his family tree to show which one was the mother, aunt, children named for the grandmother and which for the great aunt of his maternal grandparents.



Tammy Williams-Anderson told about the “Utopia” experiment during the depression as part of President Roosevelt’s “New Deal”. Originally called Jersey Homesteads today known as Roosevelt New Jersey where the homesteads were established, and where her mother and her grandparents lived in the late 1930’s-early 1940’s. The program established a cooperative

for immigrant Jews for family living, farming and manufacturing –all within walking distance of their homes. The objective was for the immigrant Jews to escape poverty. The experiment did not last through WWII. There were 200 homes established and the residents had to pay a subscription fee plus a small monthly fee. The New Jersey homesteads are registered on the National Register of Historic Places—the only such New Jersey designation. A copy of Tammy’s graduate school paper, *Was the Jersey Homesteads of Roosevelt, New Jersey a Utopia, and What Happened To It?* is in the JGSCV traveling library –Category C.

**DON'T FORGET TO SIGN-UP OR RENEW
YOUR RALPH'S COMMUNITY
CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM AT
WWW.JGSCV.ORG
CLICK ON NOTICES**

FUTURE MEETING DATES

2011

Monday, Sept. 12th 7:00-9:00 PM:
Hal Bookbinder US IMMIGRATION and
NATURALIZATION

Monday, Oct. 10th 7:00-9:00 PM: Crista Cowan,
FINDING YOUR JEWISH ANCESTORS ON
ANCESTRY.COM *and* JGSCV'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY!

Monday, Nov. 7th 7:00-9:00 PM: Jan Meisels Allen,
HOW TO BEGIN YOUR GENEALOGY

Sunday, Dec. 11th 1:30-3:30 PM: Steve Morse,
FROM DNA TO GENETIC GENEALOGY and
Chanukah/Membership Renewal Party

FUTURE MEETING DATES

2012

Sunday, Jan. 8th 1:30-3:30 PM: Panel, ETHICS,
SENSITIVITIES, SENSIBILITIES AND PROPERTY
RIGHTS

Sunday, February 12th 1:00-5:00 PM
Annual Assisted Research Afternoon at the Los
Angeles Regional Family History Library-Current
Dues Paid Members-only

Sunday, March 4th 1:30-3:30 PM: Joel Weintraub,
HERE COMES THE 1940 CENSUS

Sunday, April 1st 1:30-3:30 PM: TBD

Sunday, May 6th 1:30-3:30 PM: VISITING YOUR
ANCESTRAL SHETLAND TOWNS

Sunday June 10, 2012 1:30-3:30 PM TBD

July no meeting- IAJGS International Conference on
Jewish Genealogy Paris, France July 15-18, 2012

Sunday, August 5, 2012 1:30-3:30 PM TBD

Programs are subject to change. Check JGSCV website,
www.JGSCV.org



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

Monday, September 12, 2011 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

The Program: US Immigration and Naturalization

One of the first things that the newly created United States of America did was to establish laws covering naturalization. These laws, however, were administered by the states with many variations. Over the years, the laws were repeatedly changed. Finally, in 1906 the Federal Government took control of the entire process. The standardized documentation after 1906 has proven invaluable to genealogical researchers. Similarly, laws controlling immigration have also changed over time, generally becoming more restrictive. As immigration and naturalization documentation can be key information in tracing one's roots, understanding how the process worked over time, understanding how the information was recorded and where it might be found is essential. This lecture will provide a short history of immigration and naturalization laws and provide general guidance in finding your ancestor's documentation.



Speaker: Hal Bookbinder has been researching eight family lines for over 27 years, identifying 4,000 relatives and tracing two of these lines into the mid 1700s. A founding member of JGSCV, and former president of JGSLA and IAJGS, he created, and continues to edit the annual Jewish Genealogical Yearbook. In 2010, Hal received the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award for his various contributions to Jewish Genealogy. Hal was recently elected to the JewishGen Board of Governors. He has spoken at numerous conferences, synagogues and society meetings on topics from computing to geography to brick walls.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (www.jgscv.org) is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Anyone may attend meetings.

JGSCV ARTICLE ON ACHILLE LEVY STORY FROM 2010 NEWSLETTER HELPS TWO FAMILY MEMBERS

By Jan Meisels Allen, JGSCV PRESIDENT

The October 2010 issue of *Venturing Into Our Past*, included an article, *Achille Levy and the Museum of Ventura County: A Genealogical Journey*. Achille Levy was the founder of the Bank of A. Levy, with branches in Ventura County, CA. In July I received two separate inquiries emanating from the article: Dan Marx whose maternal great grandfather was Henry Levy, Achille's cousin and business partner and Mary Levy who believes she may be a great-granddaughter of Achille's sister, Sara. Both Mary and Dan Googled their respective ancestors and found them mentioned in the article.



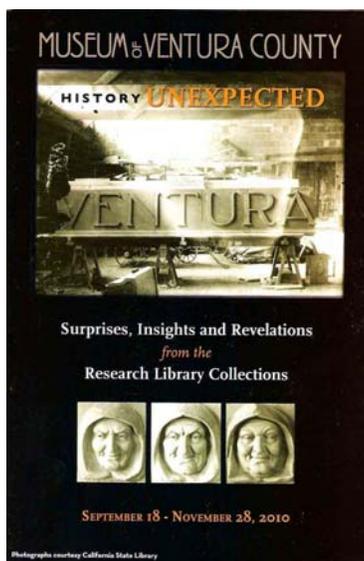
Achille Levy

Dan Marx wrote :

“I just happened to Google Moise L. Wolff/Hueneme, CA. and came across your article about Achille Levy and the efforts that you went to, to translate something that had been written in an old prayer book that I believe had been donated to the Museum. I read through your article, enjoyed it a great deal, and even learned a couple of things about Achille that I hadn't known. My maternal grandfather was Henry Levy who was Achille's business partner in both the A and H Levy Company (agricultural brokerage) and the Bank of A Levy. As you know, Henry and Achille were not only brothers in law but cousins! In your article you also mentioned Moise L. Wolf, a cousin of mine, Samuel Weill, another cousin of mine, Leon Cerf who I am not sure if he was a cousin or not, and Isadore Weill, my paternal great grandfather. Thank you for your research and nice article.”

Ten days earlier, I received an email from Mary Levy in Oklahoma who believes she is a descendant of Achille's sister, Sara. Mary wrote, “I am having great difficulty in researching my family as I live in Oklahoma and my origin I believe is Alsace because my father was born in Nancy, France. My father spoke very little of his family but told me once that he had distant cousins in California that owned a number of banks. My father's grandmother was named Sara and I was wondering if she could be the sibling of Achille?”

Museum Exhibit Notice



Achille and the documents we have, show the family from the town of Mommenheim, in the Alsace. Nancy is not in the Alsace region but in the Moselle region of Lorraine, [per Google maps, Nancy is about 130 km west, of Mommenheim] as explained to us by Rosanne Leeson, co-coordinator of the French SIG. For the original article, Rosanne helped JGSCV obtain some of the birth records of Achille and his sibling Sara, their parents' marriage record and the death record of her father. Reflecting on the subject Rosanne commented, "The surname Levy was the Jewish Alsatian and Lorraine equivalent of Smith. Ever so many came to California as there were pogroms in Alsace in 1848-9, just at the same time as gold was discovered here". Mary also replied that, "I agree that Achille may not have been my father's great uncle but it sounds very coincidental because the Sara Josephine Levy that I know of named her son Isidore Achille."

Both Dan and Mary gave permission for me to write something on their contacting JGSCV and to share each other's e-mails with them. Perhaps *Venturing Into Our Past* is responsible for bringing together previously unknown cousins . . . but then isn't that what genealogy is all about!



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

PREPARE FOR THE 1940 US CENSUS RELEASE

Upon its release on April 2, 2012, the 1940 US Census will be available for online research at no charge. It will NOT include a name index so in order to locate a specific individual you will be required to know that person's address and the Census Enumeration district for that address. The National Archives offers help for genealogists in preparation for the census release – including ways to identify the Enumeration District - at <http://tinyurl.com/3qf8byl>. The National Archives (NARA) has recently uploaded the 1940 Enumeration District (ED) maps to their website. These ED maps will be very useful for searching rural and small urban areas. The maps can be located using NARA's Archival Research Catalog (ARC) at <http://arcweb.archives.gov/arc/action/BasicSearchForm>.

In addition, Steve Morse offers alternative methods for finding Enumeration Districts at his One-Step Site <http://tinyurl.com/3exszwn>. Additionally, Steve and Joel Weintraub produced a simpler search form for rapidly getting to the NARA maps. The new utility entitled: "Viewing 1940 ED Maps in One Step" is at <http://www.stevemorse.org/census/arc1940edmaps.html>

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