



JGSCV

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

May, 2013

Volume 8 Issue 8

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

JGSCV had a phenomenal Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial) commemoration. Seventy members and friends attended the program and provided insight to various holocaust experiences. Our presenters were: Ruth Drobman, who spoke on going into hiding, Kristallnacht, Kindertransport and living in Sweden; Werner Frank reported on the 1940 deportation of over 6,000 German Jews to Camp de Gurs, a Vichy France internment facility; Debbie Enenstein talked on her experience and return visit to the Displaced Persons Camp where she was born; Indy Rebhun and Jeff Spector reviewed their 2012 March of the Living experience. Audience attendee Dina Klayman relayed her experience of getting out of Belgium to France to Portugal to England and back to Belgium and finally the United States. See page 8 for highlights of the program.

If you have not yet completed Pages of Testimony for those you may have lost in the Shoah please do so. Instructions and blank pages are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ckwcaur>

We need more volunteers to assist with the synagogue memorial plaque project. We need people who will contact the synagogues, copy the information from the plaques or photos of the plaques, take photos of the plaque walls and complete a

May, 2013



Speakers clockwise from top right: Werner Frank, Jeff Spector, Ruth Drobman, Indy Rebhun, Debbie Enenstein

NEXT MEETING

SUNDAY, May 5th 1:30-3:30 PM

Obscure Records of Citizenship and Nationality

Marian Smith, Chief of the Historical Research Branch, United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) will discuss lesser-known federal records of citizenship & repatriation and more.

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short form for each one. Please contact me at president@jgscv.org to participate.

The Library project of copying the title and Verso (copyright pages) of the majority of traveling library to be placed in the Agoura Hills Library is progressing. We will need additional volunteers to help once library central provides us with the labels and bar codes for each book before they get placed on the row of shelving that awaits us.

May is Jewish American Heritage Month. This year's theme is American Jews in Entertainment. See page 7 for more information.

As genealogists we are unable to pursue our genealogy hobby or occupation without access to birth, marriage and death records. We are under siege by government agencies and repositories that have the incorrect assumption that access to these records or the Social Security Death Index by the public, including genealogists, are the reasons for identity theft. **That is not true!** There are many proven instances that hacking into computer systems of government agencies and businesses has led to people's identity being stolen. Unfortunately, the Internal Revenue Service has inadvertently allowed the Social Security numbers of some deceased individuals to be stolen due to lack of preventive measures. Because of this incorrect assumption there are currently four bills in Congress that would either completely prevent or delay access to the Social Security Death Index. We expect the White House to also introduce legislation that will restrict access. Additionally, legislation has been introduced in some states that would try to extend the embargo period to access birth, marriage and death records by adopting a proposed, not approved, revision to the 2011 Model Vital Statistics Act. If you are interested in this issue of records access and what is happening to prevent our access and how you can get involved I would encourage you to register for IAJGS's Records Access Alert by going to: <http://tinyurl.com/brxf62z> and follow the instructions to enter your email address, full name and JGS affiliation. You will receive an email response that **you must reply** to or the subscription will not be finalized.

And of course don't forget the IAJGS 33rd International Conference on Jewish Genealogy- Boston August 4-9, 2013. See more on page 6. Several of JGSCV members will be there as presenters!

Our May 5th meeting is a VERY special treat. Our speaker is Marian Smith, Chief of the Historical Research Branch within the USCIS in Washington. D.C. She is an Historian who first joined that organization in 1988 when it was the INS. She now directs the agency's History, Library, and fee-for-service Genealogy programs. She will be talking on *Obscure Records of Citizenship and Nationality*. The presentation will focus on lesser-known federal records of derived citizenship, repatriation, and correspondence covering a variety of citizenship-related problems and topics. If you were at the April 7th meeting you heard me mention how using the USCIS fee-for-service genealogy program allowed me to break down a long-standing brick wall!

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.

2013 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send a check in the appropriate amount 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.

GESHER GALICIA WEBSITE REDESIGNED

The Geshher Galicia site has been restructured and redesigned from the ground up, including the addition of a new membership portal where you will find a pathway to all things Galician (including many resources for Polish and Ukrainian researchers) with an easy and intuitive interface: <http://www.GeshherGalicia.org/>

TURKISH NEWSPAPER SURVIVES & THRIVES

Published weekly since 1947 in Istanbul, *Salom* survived a crisis in 1983. Today each 20 page edition includes at least one page in Ladino. Read the story as reported in *The Times of Israel*: <http://tinyurl.com/bo3sadm>

FREE ACCESS TO CONFEDERATE CIVIL WAR RECORDS THROUGH APRIL 30th

Fold3 is offering free access to 32 collections with more than 19 million records created primarily during the Civil War. For access to this direct link, register with an email and password at <http://tinyurl.com/cgnya4l>

MORE AUSTRIAN RECORDS AVAILABLE

Approximately 167,000 new Austrian records have been made available by GenTeam. Records from Graz, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Vienna include marriages, cemeteries, obituaries and more. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/bo28q9j> and click on 'view this page in English' on the upper right. Registration is required.

ISRAEL GENEALOGY RESEARCH ASSOCIATION ADDITIONS

The IGRA has announced the addition of the following new databases: Cemetery of Tsofit; Kfar Saba Geulim Cemetery; POW's from Ein Zurim from War of Independence (1948); Patients at Misdav Ladach Hospital; Ramot HaShavim Cemetery; Voters' List for Local Council Rehovot (1937); Guide to 100 Years of Hebrew Theatre (1889-1989). Access is free but requires registration. Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/dyul82s>

THOUSAND OAKS LIBRARY OFFERS FREE ON-LINE GENEALOGY COURSE

The Thousand Oaks Library is offering a free on-line course on genealogy on May 15, June 19 and July 17. You must be a TO Library card holder (free) to enroll. Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/cituw8d> for more information.

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

The JGSCV will hold a general meeting, co-sponsored with and located at Temple Adat Elohim, on



Sunday, May 5, 2013 1:30 p.m-3:30 p.m

2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

The Program:

Obscure Records of Citizenship and Nationality

Not all naturalization and citizenship documents can be found at the National Archives. This presentation will focus on lesser-known federal records of derived citizenship, repatriation, and correspondence covering a variety of citizenship-related problems and topics. While the records discussed were created after 1906 some involve events that occurred years or decades before. In addition to case studies and examples, the presentation will provide guidance for researching the records at either USCIS or the National Archives.

Speaker: Marian Smith is Chief of the Historical Research Branch within the USCIS in Washington. D.C. She is an Historian who first joined that organization in 1988 when it was the INS. For many years



she was a regular speaker at national genealogy conferences and the author of genealogical journal articles about immigration and naturalization history and records. She now directs the agency's History, Library, and fee-for-service Genealogy programs.

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) assumed responsibility for the immigration service functions of the federal government. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was dismantled as a result of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135) which separated the agency into three components within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The USCIS Genealogy Program is a fee-for-service program that provides researchers with timely access to historical immigration and naturalization records of deceased immigrants.

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.

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV. Annual dues are \$25 for an individual and \$30 for a family. Dues paid good through December 2013.

JGSCV UPDATES . . .

Traveling Library books in category A and B will be available at the May 5th meeting. To request a book for a future meeting please email Jan Meisels Allen at least 5 days in advance of the meeting at president@jgscv.org.



THE SCHMOOZING CORNER is now open 20 minutes before all meetings. Come to the front right corner of the meeting room and look for a sign like the one on the left. Founding JGSCV member Hal Bookbinder will facilitate the Schmoozing Corner.

The 33rd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in Boston August 4-9, 2013. Several JGSCV members will be speaking at the Conference. Jan Meisels Allen will speak on three occasions: JGS Management, Genealogy Under Fire: Government Actions . . . , and Yizkor Book Project. Warren Blatt will speak on the following three topics: Introduction to Jewish Surnames, JewishGen 2013, Jewish Given Names. Hal Bookbinder will speak about: The Changing Borders of Eastern Europe, Ships of Our Ancestors, Why Did Our Ancestors Leave a Nice Place Like the Pale? Debra Kay-Blatt will conduct a Computer Workshop on an Introduction to JewishGen (additional fee required).

You can also help JGSCV when you shop at Amazon.com by simply entering the Amazon site from JGSCV's **home page**. Start at www.jgscv.org and scroll to the bottom to click on the Amazon graphic



(like the one on right). This will take you to the same page you always start at – except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee at no cost to you.

Ralphs requires everyone to reregister for their community contribution program. If you have a Ralphs card and are not yet signed up, please do so and include JGSCV as your 'community'. Your groceries cost the same but Ralphs will send JGSCV a contribution. If you need help setting this up, please ask at the front desk when you arrive at the next meeting or see www.jgscv.org under "notices".

The Santa Barbara Jewish Festival, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara will be held in Santa Barbara's Oak Park on Sunday, April 28, 2013, from 11am to 4pm. An important part of the Jewish community, the festival offers a variety of activities including entertainment like klezmer music, youth and adult choirs, Israeli dancing. There will be food galore and an array of artisans with Judaica crafts. To read more go to: <http://tinyurl.com/a7xubje>



If you enjoy and are enriched by JGSCV programs, please remember to renew your membership or join for the first time. JGSCV dues helps defray the costs required to develop such a full schedule of fertile programs and speakers to enhance your genealogical research and experience.



IAJGS CONFERENCE UPDATE

By Florence Schumacher, Publicity Chair 33rd IAJGS

A rich and varied roster of speakers will be presenting during the five and a half days of the 33rd IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy to be

held in Boston beginning August 4.

Attendees will be able to choose from 250 programs on seven different tracks covering a wide range of topics including a beginner's track on August 4/5, as well as computer tracks and a film festival. The preliminary program (subject to change) is posted on the conference website <http://tinyurl.com/c2rox68>

Many IAJGS Lifetime Achievement award winners, the luminaries of Jewish genealogy, will give talks, including Steve Morse, Miriam Weiner, Peter Lande, Jeff Malka, Michael Tobias, Stanley Diamond as well as JGSCV's own Hal Bookbinder, Warren Blatt, Debra Kay-Blatt and Jan Meisels Allen. Archivists from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, and Ukraine will be giving the latest information about doing research in their countries. Historians and experts from England, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and

the U.S. will provide the historical context to our ancestors' lives and the methodologies to find them.

Unique to the Boston location of the conference will be several talented local experts who have never presented at previous IAJGS conferences. The keynote speaker will be Aaron Lansky, the famous and dynamic founder of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA.

Ellen Smith, co-author of *The Jews of Boston* and a well-known historian, museum curator, and professor at Brandeis University, will give a talk as well as conduct walking tours of Boston's Jewish historical sites. Sharon Pucker Rivo, Director of the National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University, will present "Jews in Focus" about the important Jewish role in film.

Genealogical research in the New England states will be featured, including immigration to the Port of Boston. Early registration ends April 30th.

To register: <http://tinyurl.com/adm2fgt>

JGSCV MEMBER BENEFITS

- Annual assisted research afternoon at the Family History Library
- Members-only emails from the president announcing special events and free opportunities with Ancestry and other genealogical organizations and other items of genealogical interest
- Use of the traveling library at president's home – with an advance appointment
- For the first year of membership, JewishGen's Warren Blatt will assist with one concise question per month. He won't do your genealogy but with well thought out questions, he can help you on your genealogical journey.
- NEW! Members-Only Workshops on valuable genealogy tools

At the Autry Museum:

JEWES IN THE LOS ANGELES MOSAIC



The Autry Museum in Griffith Park is hosting an exhibit of interest to all Jewish genealogists with roots in Los Angeles: *JEWES IN THE LOS ANGELES MOSAIC*. From May 10th to January 5, 2014 one can explore how a growing Jewish community settled, and how the diversity and dynamism of Los Angeles have transformed the local Jewish community for the past 160 years. This exhibition is the story of neighborhoods like Boyle Heights and Fairfax, people like Billy Wilder, Max Factor, and Frank Gehry, and lynchpin industries like the movies and suburban land development. See how Jews helped change the region by recruiting the

Brooklyn Dodgers, inventing the Barbie doll, and joining other Angelinos in electing the city's first African American mayor.

Featuring more than 150 stories, documents, objects, and images of family, community, and society, *Jews in the Los Angeles Mosaic* highlights how the history of Jews in Los Angeles is at once familiar—one of the many in the cultural mosaic of the city—and unique. Included are scheduled lectures and a screening of 'Double Indemnity (directed by Billy Wilder) as well as a bus tour of Jewish Los Angeles and weekend Docent Tours. There may be museum admissions required. Check the website: <http://tinyurl.com/bnfnctc>

See page 12 for more genealogical events in the Los Angeles area.

JEWISH AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

The month of May is Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM). In 2006 President George W. Bush in 2006 responded to the urgings of congressional leaders by recognizing the more than 350-year history of Jewish contributions to American culture. President Barack Obama has continued the celebration of Jewish American Month. JAHM acknowledges the achievements of American Jews in fields ranging from sports and arts and entertainment to medicine, business, science, government, and military service. This year's theme is *American Jews in Entertainment* is reflected on the website: <http://www.jahm.us>.



Included on the website is the "Only in America Hall of Fame" with categories from arts and entertainment, business and philanthropy, literature, politics, law and activism, sports and more. See: <http://survey.nmajh.org/index.php?category=1>

Highlights From: *Yom Hashoah* Commemorative Program

By Jan Meisels Allen

On April 7th JGSCV commemorated Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Memorial Day). We had presentations by JGSCV members and friends who shared how the Shoah impacted their lives. The program started with a video from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM).

A summary of the presentations:

Ruth Drobman was born and raised in Berlin, Germany. She had one sister and loving parents. Their lives were pleasant until Hitler rose to power. Ruth's father arranged for the children to be part of the Kindertransport which brought children to relative safety out of the country. Ruth and her sister were brought to family acquaintances in Sweden where they remained until a Jewish organization placed them in separate homes in the country. Their parents visited them before immigrating to Hollywood where Ruth's aunt lived. After her parents were settled in Hollywood they sent for Ruth and her sister.

Werner Frank spoke about Camp de Gurs where in October 1940 approximately 6,500 Jews were deported from the southwest region of Germany and were sent west into France. Werner started his research to

find out what happened with his aunt and uncle who were taken to Camp de Gurs and found 700 family members out of the 6,500 were imprisoned at the Camp.

In France there were round-ups including the Grand Raffle on July 16, 1942 (focus of movie *Sarah's Key*) who were sent to Drancy. Those in Gurs were also sent to Drancy –including Werner's aunt and uncle in August 1942 to be deported to Auschwitz and death.

Werner was able to research his family and Gurs to the extent that there were records at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and Mémorial de la Shoah Musée, in Paris.

Debbie Enenstein – See transcript following this story

Indy Rebhun and Jeff Spector participated in the 2012 March of the Living along with others including students, liberators and holocaust survivors. The March of the Living is an international program that brings Jews and non-Jews from all over the world to Poland and Israel. They march from Auschwitz to Birkenau and visit Krakow, Warsaw, Lodz and death camps at Chelmo and Majdanek as well. Indy and Jeff showed photos of the camp depicting the conditions those in the camp had to endure—and items from the museum including the gas chamber and crematorium remains. There was a ceremony for liberators during the March honoring the heroic veterans of WW II who fought to liberate Europe from



Speakers (l-r): Ruth Drobman, Debbie Enenstein, Werner Frank, Dina Klayman, Jeff Spector, Indy Rebhun

the Nazis. The March participants laid “memorial plaques” on the train tracks that led to Auschwitz. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the participants by live video.

After Poland the participants went to Israel in time for the State of Israel’s Independence Day. In Jerusalem the March continued to the Kotel (western wall). Indy and Jeff said the March of the Living was a journey from the dark past of the holocaust when the Jewish people were defenseless to the brightness of Israel today where Jewish people are free and no longer defenseless.

Dina Klayman, an audience member, shared her story of leaving Belgium with her parents for Bordeaux and Toulouse France where they stayed in a small town full of SS troops before going to Spain. They traveled by car with at least \$400 in cash hidden inside requiring them to remain in the car. They traveled from Portugal to England even though they had the opportunity—twice to go to the United States. Her father was imprisoned in England while Dina and her mother were held in Victoria School for Girls. During World War II, the British thought all immigrant males were spies and imprisoned them until proven otherwise. The family lived in England during the War where Dina was the only Jewish girl in a school of 600. After the war, her father helped repatriate Jews to Belgium. In 1951 they left Belgium and immigrated to the United States.

There was a lively question and answer period where all the participants answered questions.

REVISITING A BIRTHPLACE: A DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP

By Debbie Enenstein (transcript as presented at the April 5th JGSCV meeting)

It was January 2, 1952. A 4/12 year old child watched with her mother the tall statue in the harbor. It was so big with a crown on its head, holding a torch. They were on the deck of the General M. B Stewart, an army transport vessel coming to America. The mother of the little girl had tears in her eyes and the little girl asked her mommy what was wrong. She answered that this was a special day and she was crying not with sadness but great joy. This day was the beginning of good things and there would be no more suffering. I was that little girl. We entered the United States of America on January 2, 1952. As I look back I realize that my early life was a blur and there are many mysteries I will never be able to solve because the family I had can no longer answer the questions I thirst now to know. What a shame.

I was born in a displaced persons camp in Wels Austria on April 28, 1947. All my life I had not thought about what that meant nor thought it was any different from any other child’s place of birth. The internet did not take me right to a perfect site with beautiful pictures of a fabulous place where people dream of coming from. When I tell people I was born in a displaced persons camp the first thing they envision is the Japanese internment camps during WWII. Very few people know much about the displaced persons camps after WWII in Europe. After much research I found on the Internet information on the city of Wels. When I went to the site I found the department of city Archives. After communicating with Gunther Kallier, Magistrate of the Wels Archives I decided to travel back to find my [past].

When the war ended in June 1945 there were an estimated 700,000 displaced persons and refugees, including about 80,000 concentration camp inmates of five large camps, 200,000 displaced Austrian refugees, and 250,000 disarmed enemy forces (prisoners of war). These people found themselves in unfamiliar places facing an uncertain future. They came from every country that had been invaded and/or occupied by German forces. A large number of refugees were in critical condition as a result of malnutrition, abuse, and disease. Many died. Many people's homes had been either destroyed during the war or taken by others as their homes. Those that tried to get them back were killed. The Jews were still hated and had difficulty getting any kind of help. Vigilantes in Poland often held murderous anti-Jewish riots in Krakow on August 20, 1945, Lublin November 19, and most notably in Kielce on July 4, 1946, the Kielce pogrom. To give you an idea of the enormity of the problems three months after V-E Day, and even longer, many Jewish displaced persons and others were living under guard behind barbed-wire fences, in camps built by the Germans for slave-laborers and Jews, including some of the most notorious of the concentration camps, amidst crowded, frequently unsanitary and generally grim conditions, in complete idleness, with no opportunity to communicate with the outside world, waiting, hoping for some word of action in their behalf. Many still lived in their concentration camp garb-stripped pajama or German S.S. uniforms. Can you imagine the horror of it? As Jews, non-Jews, political prisoners, and murderers were all mixed together many social issues occurred. The Americans in their zone found that they had to reconstruct the camps to accommodate the needs of the people so camps were set up for Jews from various countries.

In 1945 when the war ended my father was on the Russian front. He had been in the Russian Army fighting the Germans. He spoke often of having no change of clothes or enough food to eat when he was in the Army. So the War ends and he has no place to go, doesn't know if any of his family is alive or what to do. He hears that the Allied forces are providing food and shelter in camps set up for displaced persons. As a Polish citizen he goes to Breslau (then Germany now Poland) where many Polish people were going. My mother who had been captured by the Russians as a German at the beginning of the war had been sent to Yakuts Gulog in Siberia. She had escaped the gulog and under a false Polish passport hid in Siberia until finally arriving at the same Polish camp. She met and married my father and they were sent to Wels, Austria, another Polish camp. Displaced persons often moved from camp to camp, looking for family, countrymen or better food, accommodations, etc. Over time ethnic and religious groups concentrated in certain camps.

The few pictures are my mother and father. I have one picture of a group of barracks made of wood standing on a dirt road. The wood is weather beaten and barren. The picture is dated 1950 and in Hebrew says Happy New Year.

THE LAGER- So what was it like to live in the displaced persons camps? I always wondered why my parents did not speak much about life in the camp. You would think the war was over, the Americans were helping, no one wanted to murder you anymore, what could be better? There were 1400 people living in our camp, lager 1001. This facility was originally a sub-camp of the well-known concentration camp of Mauthausen. Our camp was a Polish Jewish camp and most people spoke Polish or Yiddish. As my mother's primary language was German and we were in Austria my first language was German. (In 1951) families lived in an 8 x 8 room. There was a central hallway and the bathrooms were at the end of the hall shared by the entire barrack, usually 14-22 families. Baths were taken once a week. Our room had a bed, table and chest of drawers. There was a basin used to bring in water to wash up with.

The room and our food were heated by a potbellied stove fed by coal and wood. Clothing was washed in a central basin in the wash kitchen.) buildings in which we lived were not fit for winter.

My father would go to a neighborhood farm to bring back fresh unpasteurized cow's milk and eggs daily for me. Vegetables were grown on the surrounding land DP Camp lager. Chickens were raised and a Rabbi would kasher the meat. Black market thrived in the camps and bartering with American chocolate and cigarettes were the usual. Those who were unable to work would line up for food at mealtimes. 1001 was outside of town approximately 30 minutes from the city center. Most immigrants stayed within the DP camp. WORK- My father did not work in the camp having sustained an injury to his head during the war and having occasional seizures. We were better off than most as my mother worked as a nurse KRANKENSWESTER on base and was able to get additional food and supplies. (My) mother (was a) nurse. She had access to doctors and to obtain medical care for us because of her ability to speak English and fluent German and she worked in the infirmary. We were lucky when relatives sent packages of clothing and canned food.

HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE IN CAMP- In the months and sometimes years following the end of the war, displaced persons typically reported to military personnel who attended to their medical needs. My mother would tell of the people coming in on transports from other camps. They were malnourished, full of lice with many respiratory diseases mainly TB. Some were dying.

We were considered non-entities. Each quarter we would have to report to the IRO to have our visas stamped. I was not a citizen of Austria. I was an Israelishte, a Jew. When we went into town we would travel in the back of the Army trucks.

Many of the people did not have a formal education as they had been taken by the Germans out of school when they were young or out of rural areas with no previous training. Schools for young children were set up in the camp run by Nuns. School was taught in German and many had great language difficulties as they spoke Polish with their families. The people of the camp trained each other in trades such as carpentry, tailoring, agriculture getting ready for their migration to Palestine.

My mother would go into town for material and clothes for me because the seamstress in Wels would not sell garments to the Jews but as my mother was German it was OK. Then my mother would take my clothes and show the other women in the camp how to make dresses and coats for their children.

So I returned to Wels and Gunther the magistrate of Wels met us at the train station. He told me he had a surprise for me as we traveled in his car. I had been told that the Lager no longer existed but as we stopped there was a barrack in front of me. He told me that a woman and her husband had bought the barrack in 1957 when they were destroying the camp and had made it her home. She had added electricity, plumbing and had been living there since. He asked if I would like to see the inside and I was very excited to do so. He found the woman and explained in German that I had been born in the camp and had come all the way from the US to see it. She was thrilled to show us her home and what she had done to it. After seeing her rooms she said that there was one room that she had never gotten around to fixing and would I like to see it. It was like deja vu. I had been in this room before. Remember the picture of us at a party. This was the room. It was overwhelming.

Gunther then took us back to the Archive building and asked if I remembered anything of the town of Wels. I told him that my only memory of town was when I went to the puppet theater. Here is the puppet theatre of 1950 now a grain warehouse. We toured the town of Wels PICTURE OF Archives bldg. Lunch with Gunther and Michael our guide in a 15 century restaurant, and the seamstress shop where my mother would go for my clothes.

Gunther took me to the Hall of Records which was in existence since 1946 and pulled the 1947 census book. Thanks to our family in the US and The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) (HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY) we were able to get on a quota list to come to America in 1947. Our quota number came up in Dec 1951. HIAS offered food, shelter and other aid to countless new arrivals. Since its founding in 1881, HIAS assisted more than four and a half million people in their quest for freedom. HIAS was instrumental in evacuating the displaced persons camps and aiding in the resettlement of some 150,000 people in 330 U.S. communities, as well as Canada, Australia and South America.

2013 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Sunday, May 5th 1:30-3:30 PM
"Obscure Records of Citizenship and Nationality", Marian Smith, USCIS

Sunday, June 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM *"Lodz, The Manchester of Poland"*, Debra Kay Blatt

Sunday, July 14th 1:30-3:30 PM
"Genealogy In The Round"

NO MEETING IN AUGUST DUE TO
IAJGS CONFERENCE IN BOSTON
AUGUST 4-9

MORE GENEALOGICAL EVENTS IN THE AREA

We are very fortunate to live in an area with many Jewish and genealogical (Jewish and non-Jewish) "functions":

- Israel's 65th Independence Day Festival April 21st 10AM -7 PM at Rancho Park in Los Angeles (Our sister JGS, JGSLA will have a table at the festival)
<http://www.celebrateisraelfestival.com/>
- 2013 Santa Barbara Jewish Festival and Celebration of Israel's 65th Year of Independence 11:00 AM-4:00 PM in Oak Park in Santa Barbara
<http://www.jewishsantabarbara.org/page.aspx?id=233538>
- The Jews in Los Angeles Mosaic-Autry National Center May 10, 2013-January 5, 2014
<http://theautry.org/exhibitions/jews-in-the-los-angeles-mosaic>
One of JGSCV's own, Sara Hyman is a docent for this exhibit
- Southern California Genealogical Society Jamboree June 7-9, 2013
Los Angeles Marriott Burbank <http://www.genealogyjamboree.org/>

May, 2013

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST