

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



# JGSCV

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

September 2015

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### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

JGSCV's annual *Genealogy in the Round* program was a great success! I am always nervous that we won't have enough volunteers, yet the members and friends always come through. This is **your** program to share a genealogical success, brickwall, failure or artifact. Everyone enjoys the group participation. Each story is different and this is a great way to get help and insights from the JGSCV family. Especially when it's a brickwall! To read the highlights of the seven participants see page 6.

For those who attended the 2014 IAIGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake City, you may recall the theme was the centennial of World War I. As part of that commemoration, both attendees and others, were invited to share a World War I story. Those with photographs saw them arranged in a beautiful display by Lois Rosen of JGSLA. JGSLA decided to gather the materials and put them into a book. I had lunch recently with Sandy Malek, president of JGSLA and the 2014 Conference Program Chairperson. Sandy shared with me the final proofs of the book. It is beautiful! The book is entitled *Jews in the Great War: Family Histories Retold*. Sandy will share



### NEXT MEETING

**Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> 12:30-2:30 PM**

### DNA Testing

Jay Sage will explain the different types of DNA and how each can be used appropriately by genealogists. **NOTE SPECIAL TIME!**

[WWW.JGSCV.ORG](http://WWW.JGSCV.ORG)

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### Mission Statement:

JGSCV is a non-profit organization run by enthusiastic volunteers dedicated to the sharing of genealogical information, techniques and research tools with those interested in Jewish genealogy and family history. Members who include beginners and experienced genealogists share with each other.

some stories from the book at JGSCV's **November 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting** (Monday evening). Sandy will also have books available for purchase at the end of the program. *Jews in the Great War . . .* comes in two versions: sepia and black and white—priced differently. At this time the final prices are not known, but they are expected to be reasonable. There are 37 stories that include photographs, family trees, and narratives. Stories from three JGSCV members are included: Barbara Algaze, Werner Frank, and Andrea Massion. More information will be in next month's *Venturing Into Our Past*.

Since January, we have been running a series of articles by members commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of WW II and the centennial of WW I. Authors have recounted their own experiences or ancestral research. We welcome more participants for this project. If you have some information on a relative who served during one of the two World Wars—we need to hear from you! (Holocaust stories are part of WW II.) Thus far, Werner Frank, Sarah Applebaum, Barbara Algaze, Hal Bookbinder, Allan Linderman and Stephen Weinstein have shared their stories. Joanne Cadis's story is on page 12. How about you?

Our 2016 annual membership drive begins October 1 and we already received our first 2016 renewal! Thank you Ilena and Jeffrey Hogan. For 2015 we are now at 162 members. 2016 JGSCV membership renewal forms are posted to the JGSCV website under "About JGSCV" and Membership. Forms will be available at our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting on October 11<sup>th</sup> and in *Venturing Into Our Past* starting with the October issue. There are many benefits to being a JGSCV member besides the obvious one of learning from and interacting with others who share a common passion for genealogy. Please consider sharing a genealogical technique or insight at the beginning of a JGSCV meeting. Preceding most programs, a JGSCV member may present a "5 Minute Genealogical Hint" that would be helpful to others. Volunteers have made interesting presentations such as techniques for searching newspapers and using Yizkor books. Those interested please contact me at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org). JGSCV will not be meeting in September due to all the Jewish holidays. It was near impossible to find a Sunday afternoon that did not conflict with a holiday. JGSCV programs return on October 11 to also celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To accommodate our meeting co-sponsor, Temple Adat Elohim, **we are meeting earlier than usual, 12:30-2:30 p.m.** with the traveling library available starting at 12 noon and the Schmoozing Corner open at 12:10. This is a one-time exception for meeting start time. There is a wedding scheduled starting at 3:00 p.m. and we need to give the wedding party time to access the area in advance.

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors, have a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! L'Shana Tova!

*Jan Meisels Allen*

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



May the New Year bring you and yours  
Health, Happiness & New Data!



United States  
**Census**  
Bureau

As fans of genealogy, we know the importance of accurate reporting on vital records. The US Census Bureau is conducting the **2015 National Content Test**. This test is on census content and to obtain response measurements. The test will be sent to approximately 1.2 million US households, including Puerto Rico. It is scheduled to begin on August 24 and run through October 31, 2015. **The official National Content Test day is October 1.** This was posted in the Federal Register for comments late last year. For more about the test see: <http://tinyurl.com/px9kd68> Our own Jan Meisels Allen, Chairperson of the IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee, pointed out that this may be of special interest to Mizrahi Jews as Middle Eastern and North African persons of descent are lobbying to have a separate category rather than be considered white as the current categories on the US census are: white, black, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. To read one Mizrahi's position see: <http://tinyurl.com/ojkbj5>

## New Databases at "Ancestry"

Here's a *possible* opportunity to learn the parents' names that were covered with black ink on the **Social Security**-form 5 you ordered. For more information see <http://tinyurl.com/ouzbht> This database is "information filed with Social Security through the application or claims process." Although It covers fewer people than the Social Security Death Index, it provides more information about those who are listed-notably birth place and parents' names. Many of the records appear to be the result of corrections processed well after the original SS-5 application for a Social Security number was filed. According to Ancestry, "unless the deceased would be at least 75 years old today, we do not publish the parents' names in these records."

Another new addition to Family Search is the searchable Hungary Jewish Vital Records Index, 1800-1945 here: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1787825>

## Russian Book of Memory Online

Use Google Chrome to translate this Russian website with 1000's of names of soldiers and where they fell at <http://www.memory-book.com.ua/news>

## Seattle 2016 Conference

A Discussion Group has been established for the *2016 36th Annual IAJGS Conference on Jewish Genealogy*.

To subscribe, visit the Discussion Group Home : <http://www.iajgs2016.org/discussion-list/>. At a later date, the Seattle committee will begin hotel and conference registration.

## JRI-Poland Updates

Just before the 2015 IAJGS annual conference, JRI-Poland announced the update and addition of more than 65,000 pieces of LDS data and image linking. Files for the following towns were updated or added: Belzyce, Biala Podlaska, Bychawa, Czyzewo Osada, Dubienka, Glusk, Konskowola, Kurow, Lublin, Markuszow, Michow Lubartowski, Mlawa, Piaski Luterskie, Pleszew, Przytyk, Pulawy, Sniadowo, Staszow, Swiersz, Terespol, Warszawa, Wieniawa, Wlodawa, Wohyn, and Zakroczym. Access at <http://www.jri-poland.org>

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

# 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 Sunday, October 11, 2015 at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, **12:30-2:30 p.m.**

**Note: Earlier start time for this meeting only**

**Come Celebrate JGSCV's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!**

**Meeting Topic:**

## **DNA Testing for Genealogy**

With the incredible drop in the cost of DNA sequencing, DNA testing is now affordable for individuals. Jay Sage will discuss the role of DNA in genealogical research. His presentation of the basics of human genetics will clarify the essential features of the two very different categories of tests: the Y chromosome and mitochondrial DNA tests on the one hand and the autosomal DNA test on the other. Examples will illustrate how to reach proper and appropriate conclusions from each type of test. The talk will also briefly cover how to order and perform the tests as well as the cost.

**Speaker: Jay Sage** served as co-president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston (JGSGB) from 2000 to 2003 and is currently co-editor of the Society's journal, *Mass-Pocha*. He was co-chair of the 2013 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Boston. He has lectured at the international conferences and to genealogy societies on the topics of DNA testing and the use of Google Earth as a genealogical tool. Professionally, Sage worked as a research physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



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 is open to the public and there is no charge to attend. Annual dues are \$25 for an individual and \$30 for a family. Join now for 2016!

Light refreshments will be served.

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# JGSCV UPDATES

**LIBRARY:** After seven months, the indexing department of the Los Angeles County Public Library finally catalogued eight of our 11 outstanding books. Hopefully, it won't take as long for them to catalogue the final 3. The eight that were catalogued are on the JGSCV shelves at our permanent library located at the Agoura Hills branch of the County of Los Angeles Public Library. JGSCV's webmaster David Oseas updated the listings of the permanent library books on our website [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) under Library-Permanent after JGSCV's Librarian Issie Perel, updated the information.

**WEBSITE:** While you are visiting JGSCV's beautiful and very functional website, take a look at the semi-annual update of resources—thank you David Oseas! We have well over 350 resources—these are sites helpful to your research divided into different categories to make it easier to find what you may be researching.

JGSCV continues to participate with both Amazon.com as an affiliate and with Ralphs Community Program. Simply enter the Amazon site from JGSCV's home page. Start at <http://www.jgscv.org> and scroll to the bottom to graphic This takes you



click on the Amazon (like the one here). you to the same page always start at –

except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee at no cost to you. See “notices” on the JGSCV.org website for instructions for Ralphs Community Contribution Program, too.

Remember, the SCHMOOZING CORNER is open 20 minutes before each monthly meeting is scheduled to begin. Just come to the front right corner of the meeting room and look for the “SCHMOOZING CORNER” sign where next month you will find a senior JGSCV member waiting to field your individual questions and provide one-to-one help until the meeting begins.

## JGSCV MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues are \$25 for a single membership/\$30 for a household. To join, printout the membership form on our website [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) by selecting the membership button. Send it with a check in the appropriate amount payable to: JGSCV and mail to Helene Rosen at 2891 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301

**Remember Special Time for the October 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting 12:30-2:30 at Adat Elohim**

# Genealogy in the Round

By Jan Meisels Allen

Are you searching for a good book about genealogy? How about one where 2 longtime friends agree to separately present his own family history story at a genealogy meeting and discover a family connection? Or, what about a book based on someone who learns that a future guest speaker at her local genealogy society is a cousin? Too far fetched? Welcome to last month's "Genealogy in the Round".

Werner Frank's presentation piqued the interest of Hal Bookbinder. Upon closer scrutiny, the two JGSCV founding members discovered a likely distant relationship. And, when I mentioned the name of our October speaker--Jay Sage--JGSCV member Pat Fuller wondered if it could be a cousin by marriage with the same name. She forwarded a photo and yes...it is!

Each year JGSCV holds a program entitled, *Genealogy in the Round*. This program is the members' program as all are invited to share a genealogical success, failure, brickwall or artifact. I am always concerned that we won't have enough volunteers for the meeting, yet every year we have more than enough consistently making this program one of the best. This year was no exception! This program is always excellent and continues to get better annually.

We had 9 people indicate they were going to present. One had to cancel due to illness. Unfortunately, we ran into a technical difficulty with Indy Rebhun and Jeff Spector's presentation. The Society has a 4-year old laptop and the presentation was prepared on 2013 version of PowerPoint which was not compatible. When I returned home and

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reviewed Indy's power point--without the added sound-- it was obvious the amount of work she had put into the presentation. Indy has been invited to give her presentation at a future meeting now that we know what the problem was and can work out a solution. Our apologies to Indy and Jeff.

The following are summaries of the presentations:

## Hal Bookbinder

Hal gave a two-part presentation. The first was about the recent IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Jerusalem where Hal gave



two presentations and represented JGSCV at the IAJGS Annual Meeting.

Hal shared a presentation by Alexander Beider on "*The History of Yiddish as a Clue to the History of Ashkenazic People*". The presentation explained that Yiddish developed into a separate language in the 15<sup>th</sup> century: Eastern and Western Yiddish have different origins. The Western Yiddish branch is based on German dialects spoken in western Germany with some Old French influence. The Eastern Yiddish branch has its origins in German dialects spoken in modern-day Czech Republic with some Old Czech influence. Hal advised us that Dr. Beider has a new book to be published this October, entitled, "*Origins of Yiddish Dialects*". JGSCV will purchase the book for the traveling

library when it becomes available. We have several of Dr. Beider's books in the traveling library on the origins of names from different countries,

Hal also shared a session with two of the three Zvhill Rebbes—cousins who share that title. One of the Rebbes is Yitzak Aharon Korff, the Rebbe of Zvhill-Mezbizh and the chaplain of the City of Boston. Hal showed a seven-generation chart from the Apter Rav. Hal's grandmother would tell his father that he was the 7<sup>th</sup> generation from the Apter Rav, Avraham Yehoshua Heshel, through her mother, Rose Margolis. This would make Hal the 8<sup>th</sup> generation from the Apter Rav. Avraham Yehoshua Heshel was a disciple of the Bal Shem Tov—from whom Rebbe Korff is descended. The ancestry of the Apter Rav can be traced back to Rabbi Meir ben Isaac Katzenellenbogen of Padua (1482-1565). Rebbe Korff confirmed that the Heschel and Margolis families intermarried which may connect Hal, but no specifics are yet researched to tie Rose Margolis to the Heshel family. The search to connect to the Katzenellenbogen family continues. Hal showed a slide with the locations of Zhvill, Medzhybizh, Dubno (Hal's ancestral town) and Brody (Jan Meisels Allen's ancestral town) depicting the closeness of all the towns which are all in the Ukraine (today's geography).

Hal also shared with us four stories of survival and death—Stories of the Shoah-- focusing on his Buchbinder family also related to the Beinstock, Fradkin and Kobernick families—descendants from his grandfather Samuel Bookbinder's siblings: Moishe and Ester Buchbinder.

Boris Fradkin descends from Ester Buchbinder, and was born in Moscow, Russia in 1948. Hal shared that Boris' grandfather, mother and aunt were traveling back to Dubno from Lviv in 1941 when caught by Ukrainian irregulars who brought together a sizable number of Jews whom they preceded to murder, shooting them

and dumping them into a pit next to the road. His grandfather was killed though his mother and aunt survived by falling into the pit and playing dead. Boris' father was an engineer and colonel in the Soviet military. After the ordeal on the road from Lviv, his mother survived by posing as a Christian and his aunt survived as a partisan. When the Soviets retook Dubno in 1944, Boris' father came to Dubno to see if his wife, with whom he had had no communication in three years had survived. He found her and they settled in Moscow where both became college professors. They emigrated to Israel in the 1970s.

Another descendant of Ester Buchbinder was Benzion Beinstock, with his wife Sarah, a well-to-do family who owned a mill outside of Dubno. Within a couple of months of the Nazi's taking Dubno in June 1941, their sons were murdered in the street. Benzion and Sarah were hidden by the foreman of his mill, living in their crude basement for several years. They settled in Leningrad after the war. As they had no more children, their line ended.

Yet another descendant of Ester was Mordechai "Moti" Beinstock. Moti's father was a private in the Polish army. When the Soviets took eastern Poland, Polish enlisted troops were incorporated into the Soviet army. As Jewish Polish soldiers were suspect, many were sent to guard the eastern front. He spent the war in Siberia with no family communication, returning to Dubno to find that his entire family had been murdered, including his wife and young son. Moti's parents met in a displaced persons camp in Poland where he was born in 1948. Moti's family emigrated to Israel in 1951.

The fourth family story Hal shared was about Esther and Wolf Kobernick. (her father was Moishe Buchbinder). Their daughter Tova was sent to Palestine when the Poles followed the German lead and ejected most Jews from public schools in the 1930s. She remained in contact with her family throughout the Soviet occupation of Dubno. But, she had no further

contact with family after the Nazis captured Dubno. A friend of hers, who made Aliya after the War, was at the pit on May 5, 1942 when Tova's family was killed. She related that she saw her parents, brothers and sisters, being murdered. However, she also related that Tova's youngest sister was not at the pit and she could not account for her. Tova spent years trying to determine the fate of her youngest sister to no avail.

**Note:** Following the program, Werner Frank (see below) wrote to Hal saying Abraham Yehosua Heschel is his 9<sup>th</sup> cousin, four times removed. The Katzenellenbogen is a famous rabbinical family. I have been told through family lore that my Meisels family is also related to the Katzenellenbogen line. My research on the Meisels family from Brody has not yet been able to document this relationship.

### **Werner Frank**

Werner's presentation, *My Conundrum*, asked if he was really related or connected to a number of famous people according to unsolicited messages that he received from the Geni website. These messages asserted that Rashi was his 27th great grandfather, and that he had more distant connections with Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, Diana, Princess of Wales, Anne Frank and Albert Einstein.

Werner showed a family tree prepared by Geni.com tracing his mother



back to the late seventeenth century the Uffenheimer family of Hohenems, Austria and by marriage on to the famous bankers Oppenheimer, family Ballin and ultimately to Rashi. This pedigree is based on assuming that

two likely contemporary Jakob Uffenheimers were one and the same individual. However, Werner's earlier published research concluded that two Jakob Uffenheimers might well have been cousins. In that case, Werner's pedigree would not lead to Rashi.

So, what was the basis for the Geni conclusion that there was one Jakob Uffenheimer who married an Oppenheimer? Werner pursued this question by contacting the source of the Geni data who disclosed that the information was derived from the Uffenheimer family tree published by the Jewish Museum of Hohenems. A quick Internet check of the Museum's database did indeed show a Jacob Uffenheimer but his alleged Oppenheimer spouse is designated with a question mark.

The question mark disappeared in the process of moving data from the Museum's site to Geni and Werner's hoped for connection to Rashi was also dimmed.

This brings into question if the other connections to famous individuals are valid. As further proof of unreliable published information, Werner discovered that his "relationship" to Diana, Princess of Wales was based on the assumption that two Moses Wimpheimers, each associated with a different German town are one and the same—an error not unlike that made with the Uffenheimer's

### **Joanne Cadis**

Joanne presented about "breaking down a brick wall". The best clues she found are pouring over old photographs, letters and documents. She found when first reviewing new documents not all the information comes together immediately. She suggests whether it be a birth, marriage, death, or census record to go back and look at it several times to see what you might have missed.

Joanne came across an old letter that her aunt had sent to her father in the army. In the letter her aunt mentions her "Cousin Issie" and "Anne" going to visit her grandparents.

She found the Rothenberg name in her parent's katubah. She does not know the person named Rothenberg. Not hearing these names before she contacted several older cousins to ask them questions. She went to visit them in Phoenix—viewing old Bar Mitzvah albums-- and in New York viewing an old wedding album. While Joanne found photographs in the albums, none of the photographs had names to identify the people.

After her trips visiting the cousins, she Googled and used Facebook to look for the son of her grandmother's sister's daughter. Through Facebook she found who she was looking for, and he was able to identify all the people in the photographs. She has since found many documents to tie the people together.



Carol Lewis presenting

in

The Rothenberg's emigrated in 1912. It was difficult to identify them as the ship's manifest had their name spelled "Roitberg" but a friend helped find "her" Rothenbergs. The mother and four children were on a detainee list until the husband came for them. Every name on the manifest was different than what she had as their names: Udele for Adele; Itzk for Isadore; Gussie for Augusta, Chana for Anna and Leic for Lilly. This is a good reminder to look for the names used in the "old" country rather than the "Americanized" version of the name. Since then, Joanne has been able to find and is in touch with all five children, their spouses, children and grandchildren.

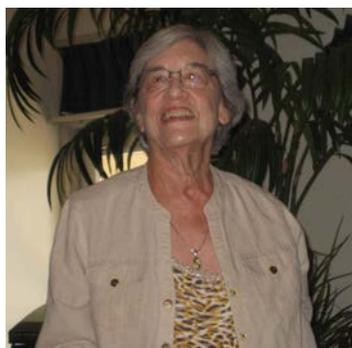
**Pat Fuller**

Pat presented, *"The Lippman Family(ies) of Minnesota: An Unfinished Story"*. Her research is to trace her maternal great-grandmother—

Yetta Lippman's family back to Europe and find out more about her family. She married Benjamin Nathanson, Sr. Yetta had seven sons and two daughters. The six oldest children were all born in Taurage, Lithuania—it is not certain if that is where Yetta was born or in Konigsberg, East Prussia. (Her death certificate has Taurage as her place of birth and the informant was her son.) The family emigrated in the 1880s—not all at the same time—and settled in Minneapolis.

Pat reviewed the information she had from family lore and family documents such as her own baby book. Pat shared with us documents such as Yetta's death certificate. Pat also reviewed what she researched: Lithuanian and German databases on the Litvak SIG, JewishGen.org and Ancestry.com. Some of the obstacles included researching Konigsberg—now Kaliningrad, Russia—because there are no Russian databases on JewishGen.org.

The Lippman/Nathanson (Pat's ancestors), the Minneapolis, and "Iron Range" Lippman's genealogy were reviewed. The Iron Range and Minneapolis Lippmans also shared the name Shalit on their trees, making the connection for those two lines but not Pat's. The "other" Lippman families had no knowledge of Yetta and family. Yet they all lived in the Minneapolis area, all came from Lithuania—but not necessarily near each other's towns. All spelled



Lippman with two "p's" and one "n". Mental illness or mental retardation was a common denominator in the Minneapolis and Iron Range branches. If they

were all related one would expect some of the older family members would remember the Lippman/Nathanson line. One of the other lines' members lived only one block from Lippman/Nathanson in Minneapolis.

A suggestion made to help Pat in her “brick wall” was to have DNA testing done on descendants of each of the three Lippman lines.

### Carol Flesher

During last year’s Genealogy in the Round, Carol shared with us her first book, *From Russia With Love—a 25 Year Journey*, which included the history of the family from the ancestral shtetl, history of the town and daily life in the shtetl, immigration, maps, names, documents, family recipes, family names, medical genealogy, and DNA reports. For her second book, she wanted to fill in the blanks—going “beyond the begats” and focusing on the narrative with anecdotes, artifacts, illustrations, news articles, stories and reflections. She has a series of letters on the family—all in Yiddish—which Rabbi Paskow is in the process of translating. She showed us copies of her first book and slides of new book.



Carol shared with us some of the ways she tries to bring the narrative to life. She utilized Google maps and their “Street View” to use

addresses from various documents to show how family members lived close to each other in clusters. This can be helpful in trying to determine whether potential family members are related. She also used side-by-side comparisons to show family resemblances and presented a different kind of artifact, a “veksel” or promissory note used in the Pale.

Hints that Carol shared included sharing information by Dropbox. Hardcopy books are expensive to print and this is a way of sharing that is “affordable”. Dropbox is a free download. She also found the *Brooklyn Eagle* news stories of great value. They can be found

at <http://bklyn.newspapers.com/> which is free access.

Carol concluded with “genealogy leads to the study of geography and history in a way that is personal and has meaning”.

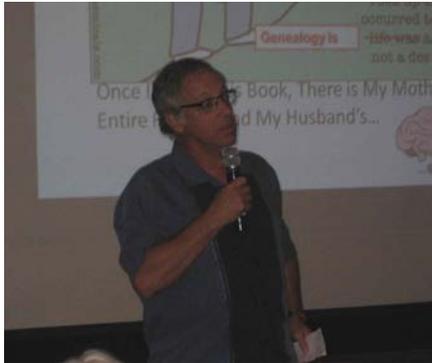
### Ken Saul

In 2012, Ken donated a copy of *My Dear Hindella Remember Me, Letters from a Lost World May 1937- January 1940*. Written by his sister Marlene Englander, this book through a series of touching letters, tells the story about Ken and Marlene’s mother, Hinda, and her early life in Belarus and Lithuania. The letters were written by Nochum Berman, a childhood friend. The book is in the JGSCV’s permanent library located at the Agoura Hills Library.

For this program, Ken spoke about his mother’s town of Vidzy, Poland (now Belarus). From the Yizkor Book on Vidzy, he learned about the Cossacks coming to town in 1917. His family went to Panevezys (formerly Poniewiez), which is where his mother was born. The family then moved back to Vidzy a few years later. In 1934, Hinda was sent to live with an aunt nearby and eventually immigrated to Cleveland in 1936.

When Ken and his sister made their Lithuanian “roots” trip in 2010, they wanted to find out what happened to their family in Vidzy. Searching the archives in Vilna (Vilnius) they thought they found their mother’s birthdate dated September 14, 1922, but the records were not in her name. Ken described a Lithuanian Jewish custom that was used to fool the “angel of death” by visiting a cemetery and renaming a child after a serious illness. So naturally he thought that this was the reason that the birth certificate was not correct. His mother had had Scarlet Fever. As it turns out, Ken’s mother did not have a birth certificate, as the midwife who delivered her did not report the birth to the authorities. The name on the September 14th certificate was Kyla Gita. This was Hinda’s younger sister. So when

documents were needed for immigration, her aunt used Kyla Gita's birth certificate. Hinda came to the United States in 1936 on the Queen Mary and became a US citizen in 1940, changing her name from Kyla Gita back to Hinda at that time. However, she kept her younger sister's birthday.



In May of this year, Ken did more research at Yad Vashem in Israel. He not only was looking for more

information about his own family, but also on Nochum Berman the young man who wrote the letters in *My Dear Hindella*. Though the research yielded nothing new on Berman, there was some new data about a childhood friend of Hinda's, Sonia, who had also lived in Vidzy.

In 1941, Jews were moved to the ghetto in Vidzy for their "protection". There were over 1000 Jews in the ghetto and in 1943, almost all of them (including Ken's family) were sent by train to Ponar and executed. (Ponar was the

site of mass executions of up to 100,000 people, mostly Jews, located about 6 miles from Vilna.) Sonia and her brother escaped the ghetto before the murders. Sonia's brother fought with the partisans in the forest and Sonia was hidden by a non-Jewish farmer. After the war Sonia went on to a refugee camp and then immigrated to Israel around 1948. In Yad Vashem Ken found the Russian census of 1939 and it listed Sonia as being born in 1921. He knew his mother was 2 years older than Sonia. Trusting that the Russian census was probably more accurate than the immigration birth records (which were often "movable" for a variety of reasons) - that would make 1919 the year Hinda was actually born. Today Hinda Saul is 96 years old.

### Carol Lewis

Carol shared with us the name of Bailey/Baily as a family name. Her brick wall is to find out more and since her mother is 103 and senile she is unable to obtain more information. Carol's sister has the middle name of Bailey.

Each year this program gets better and better. Please start planning to share your success, brick wall, failure or artifact with us for Genealogy in the Round in 2016!

## IAJGS

If you missed the 2015 Conference in Israel—you can still get a lot of information by subscribing to *On-Demand* where 62 of the sessions are available to watch and listen, with resource handouts for download. The streamed video may be viewed through October 10, 2015 for \$149. For the daily rate go to: <http://www.iajgs2015.org/> and click On-Demand.

The 2016 IAJGS International Conference in Jewish Genealogy will be held in Seattle, WA August 7-12, 2016 (see: <http://www.iajgs2016.org/>). I hope many JGSCV members and friends will attend. Their conference discussion group is open for you to subscribe. Go to: <http://www.iajgs2016.org/discussion-list/>. Requests for proposals are expected to be open in early September and registration will begin on January 4, 2016.

# My Uncle Morty: Lt. Morton E. Berger

By Joanne Cadis

Uncle Morty and crew left the United States Jan 26, 1944 and arrived in England Jan 29, 1944.

The Crew flew some 20 missions before they were shot down.

In the words of Uncle Morty: "I remember meeting my crew. I was on an airplane (I was the navigator) and we had practiced flying together. I remember getting ready to fly across the Atlantic Ocean to England. When we flew across the Atlantic I wasn't allowed to sleep because I was the navigator. *I navigated by the stars.* I couldn't use the radio because the German's would pick up our radio signals. I was very happy when we broke through the clouds because I was 15 miles off course (which is VERY good for navigating by the stars). Over the years I flew 20 different missions over Germany, but on one particular flight, our plane was hit badly by flak (shells shot from enemy guns), which knocked out two of our four engines. We couldn't keep up with the other five planes in our formation. After the engines were hit we turned around to try to fly back to England. When we were fifty miles outside of Kiel,

hated Jews. I realized that the USA and my family were about five thousand miles away and I was

all by myself.

When I got down my

whole plane crew

was separated.

I landed so hard I hurt

both feet. My first

thought was to

escape

from the Germans. However, before I could,

local German policemen rode up to me on

bicycles and captured me.

They took me as their prisoner to the nearest

town. I stayed in prison for ten days. They

wanted to get information out of me, about

my crew and where we were flying to. The

only thing I told them was my name rank,



## On the nose of the plane was painted *Jakes Jerks*

Germany our plane caught on fire and we were afraid it was going to explode. Our pilot said, "Fellows, we need to get out of this ship!" I was the first one out of the plane. I had never parachuted out of a plane before, and we were about twenty thousand feet in the air. During our training one of the things we were taught to do was not to pull the shoot until we were eight or nine thousand feet from the ground because the Germans could use us for target practice. When I did open my shoot I felt terrible. Here I was, a Jewish man about to land in a country that

and serial number (that's what we were ordered to do in training)

(Morty was put in solitary confinement; as a result he never slept through the night after that).

After ten days the Germans put me back with my crew (who were all captured). They drove us all to a prison camp. In the prison camp they put ten or twelve men in a barracks (my crew were separated). I was at that camp for six months. At this time the

September, 2015

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

war was coming to an end. We knew this because we had made and hid radios in the camp. The Germans decided to move us because the Russians were coming. We went on a forced march. It was the middle of winter and we were not dressed properly for the cold. We were on the forced march for 3-4 days. Finally we were sent to another camp for another 1 or 2 days. They put us in cattle cars for 3 days and nights to move us to southern Germany. The train cars were so crowded that there was no room for us to sit down, we could only stand.

When we finally got to southern Germany they put us in a camp there. One day we looked over the hills and saw the United States army coming to free us, we were so happy.”



**The Crew**

Lt. Morton E. Berger's Timeline From Capture

May 22, 1944 Morton and crew bailed out over Germany

June 5, 1944 received Official Telegram: Missing

June 21, 1944 received letter: was seen bailing out

June 23, 1944 –received Telegram “Prisoner in Germany

July 6, 1944 received letter Confirming Prisoner of War.

Aug 7, 1944 received ADDRESS

Aug 18, 1944 received Morty's Card

Sept. 5 1944 received card

Sept 18, 1914 received 1<sup>st</sup> letter

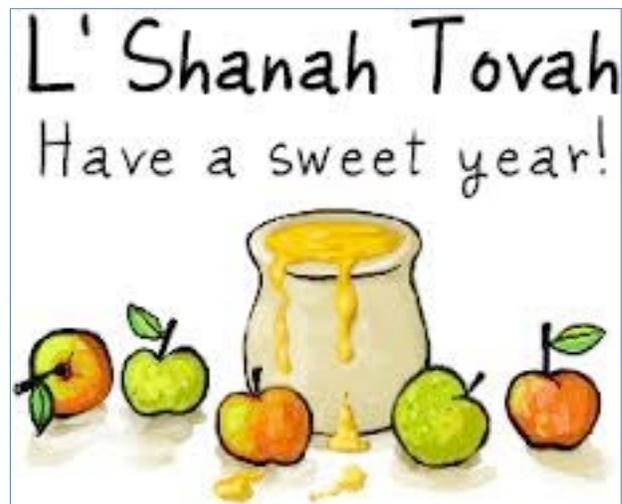
April 29, 1945 Morton was liberated from Mooseburg

May 17, 1945 Morty arrived home

On the nose of the plane was painted Jake's Jerks

Visit “Jake's Jerks” on Facebook started by Grandson Shaun O'Conner. He has connected many of the families of this crew.

We owe a lot to all our Armed Forces that suffered and fought to keep freedom in the



United States.

# Jan Meisels Allen Receives Award

As reported last month in *Venturing Into Our Past*, JGSCV President Jan Meisels Allen received the inaugural "Volunteer of the Year Award" from IAJGS at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Jerusalem last month. Jan's health did not permit her to attend the conference so her award was accepted on her behalf by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal presented the award to its rightful owner at JGSCV's August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.



Following Jan's acceptance, she was surprised by a pre-arranged congratulatory phone call from Marlis Humphrey, President of IAJGS. Marlis's audio was played over the speakers at the meeting for all attendees to hear. Below are Marlis Humphrey's remarks.

*It is with great pleasure that we present this IAJGS Achievement Award – "Volunteer of the Year" to Jan.*

*I have come to know Jan and her tireless work ethic over the past 6 years. I first met her when our local Orlando JGS was in serious trouble and contacted the IAJGS for help. Some smart*

*person at the IAJGS directed us to Jan. We scheduled a conference call and proceeded to tell her that our JGS was in such dire straights that it had tried to fold. However, the JGS Orlando couldn't shut down because it couldn't achieve a quorum to hold the vote to close the society. Jan patiently listened to our "kvetching" and tales of woe and quickly prescribed a short recipe to help us start again on a path of growth. I then saw Jan in operation as Chairman of the IAJGS Membership Development Committee, as an IAJGS Vice President, as Records Preservation and Access Committee representative, as IAJGS Public Records Access Monitoring Committee Chairman, and, you all know better than I do, the work she does for your society. I marvel at her persistence, endurance, and diligence. Jan can be tough-as-nails when she needs to be in her pursuit of records access and at the same time is one of the most thoughtful and kind-hearted of friends.*



**Jan Listening to Marlis Humphrey on the Phone**



*Jan receives many emails from individuals every week thanking her for information she has shared or advice she has given. It is because of all of this that we collectively and officially owe Jan a huge thank you and recognition as IAJGS "Volunteer of the Year". Thank you, Jan, for all you have done and for all you continue to do for the IAJGS, the JGSCV, the RPAC, and countless other societies and Jewish genealogists worldwide. Kol HaKavod!*

JGSCV joins Marlis and IAJGS in congratulating Jan for this recognition. It is only fitting that she be the first.

# Future JGSCV Meeting Dates through June 2016

Sunday afternoons starting at 1:30 Monday evenings starting at 7:00  
Programs co-sponsored by Temple Adat Elohim.

Check the website and this newsletter for future updates

September No Meeting Due to all the Jewish Holidays

October 11 Sunday **SPECIAL TIME 12:30-2:30 PM** JGSCV's 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Jay Sage: *DNA Testing for Genealogy*. With the incredible drop in the cost of DNA sequencing, DNA testing is now affordable for individuals. Mr. Sage will discuss the role that it can play in genealogical research.

November 2, Monday 7:00-9:00 PM Warren Blatt *Jewish Surnames* Learn when Jewish surnames were first used in various countries, how they developed, and their transformation upon immigration. This presentation will dispel several common myths about Jewish surnames. Classifications of surnames will include: patronymic/matronymic, toponymic, occupational, artificial, religious, and acronyms. Discover which Jewish surnames are the most common in the U.S., Eastern Europe and Israel, as well as sources for learning more about your surnames and how they may be accessed.

December 13, Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM Glenn Dynner, Ph.D. *Jews, Liquor, and Life in Eastern Europe*. In Pre-modern Poland the Jewish-run tavern was often the center of leisure, hospitality, business, and even religious festivities. As liquor became the region's boom industry, Jewish tavern keepers became integral to both local economic and local social life. Also, Annual Chanukah Party with Membership prizes

## 2016

January 3, Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM Program Pamela Weisberger, *Holly Golightly Was a Nice Jewish Girl*. Ever wonder if there was more to your family history than meets the eye? Poor immigrant Jews arriving in Der Goldene Medina (the promised land) not only shed their old world clothing and

shtetl names, but often completely reinvented their personalities, creating new identities and obscuring old ones. Using creative methodology and genealogical travel we'll explore the twisted roads our ancestors traveled to establish a new life — or run out on an old one. Learn investigative techniques for uncovering the truth about your own amazing (but often hidden) family history.

February 14 Sunday 1:00-5:00 PM Annual Assisted Research Day at LA Family History Library. JGSCV Members only.

March 6 Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM Program TBA Speaker Invited Awaiting Final Approvals

April 4 Monday 7:00-9:00 PM Program Emily Garber. *When It Takes A Village*. This presentation will outline a program for solving genealogical research problems via cluster research techniques including FAN (family, associates, and neighbors). Topics will include: appropriate application, research planning, commonly used resources and documents, and case studies successfully tracking individuals from Europe to the United States, overcoming name and residential changes.

May 1 Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM Annual Yom Hashoah Program TBA

June 5 Sunday 1:30-3:30 PM Program TBD

Programs are subject to change -check JGSCV website [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org)

## RALPHS

Each September 1<sup>st</sup> Ralphp Community Contribution Program requires members to resubscribe who is already participating and has designated JGSCV as their preferred charity. JGSCV relies on the donations from Ralphp to help with our annual operating budget. Instructions on how to subscribe or resubscribe is on the JGSCV website under "Notices". If you are not already a subscriber, you first need to obtain a Ralphp Club card which you can obtain from any Ralphp (it's free) and then you can subscribe/resubscribe on the Ralphp website. If you have any questions or need assistance in subscribing, JGSCV Treasurer Karen Lewy can assist you at a meeting. **Remember, you have to subscribe/resubscribe but not before September 1<sup>st</sup>** for it to count for their year beginning September 1, 2015-August 31, 2016. We rely on both the Amazon and Ralphp contributions for our annual operating budget—dues alone do not cover all we do.

# You May Have To Limit Your Request for California and Other States' Vital Records

By Jan Meisels Allen



If you are ordering birth, marriage or death records from some states in the US, including California, you may have to limit the number of copies requested due to a security paper shortage. The last printing firm in the United States that uses the special method known as *intaglio* has gone out of business.

California law requires birth, marriage and death certificates be printed in a method known as *intaglio*—a security paper. California's Department of Public Health and the 58 Counties use the security paper to produce requested copies of birth, marriage and death certificates. All California counties purchased the paper from a printing company in Ohio, Sekuworks, which closed resulting in at least several California counties, having a reduced supply of secure paper on-hand to produce the vital records. There are limited printers who use that method—none in the US but one in Canada. It may take legislative action to permit other types of secure paper to be used in California—38 other states had to have a change in the type of security paper they used as the *intaglio* process is no longer available from printers. As of the writing of this for *Venturing Into Our Past*, there are no bills introduced to the California Legislature that address this problem. The California Legislature is scheduled to adjourn on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Orange County Clerk-Recorder's Office is now encouraging people to limit the number of copies they order while they try to find a new supplier of *intaglio* paper. Other California counties who get their security paper from the same source are also struggling and Stanislaus County has limited the number of copies to only one. The state registrar has sufficient supplies for records into next year.

The State is working on a long-term solution according to the Sacramento County Recorder, while that County has about 9 months' supply of paper.

In the meantime don't be surprised if your requests for multiple copies of vital records may be limited.

To keep up with records access issues, which are important to accessing your genealogical research subscribe to the IAJGS Records Access Alert at: <http://lists.iajgs.org/mailman/listinfo/records-access-alerts> and follow the instructions to enter your email address, full name and your JGS (JGSCV) affiliation. You will receive an email response that you have to reply to or the subscription will not be finalized.