

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



# JGSCV

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

November 2015

Volume 11 Issue 2

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

JGSCV celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October 11. Congratulations to all who have made this possible.

We could not have done this without the wonderful support of Temple Adat Elohim which co-sponsors our programs by providing the facility with audio-visual equipment and staff for our meetings. Thank you!

Our October 11<sup>th</sup> program was *DNA Testing for Genealogy* with Jay Sage who has lectured at the international conferences and to genealogy societies on the topic of DNA testing. It was an excellent presentation. For highlights of the program see page 6. Jay's slides are posted to the website under programs, previous with the October 11, 2015 date.

Thank you to Warren Blatt for facilitating the schmoozing corner.

Remember we are in the middle of *Chesvan* which corresponds to October 14-November 12, 2015 when we celebrate International Jewish Genealogy Month.

I was delighted to learn that several members expressed interest in joining the JGSCV board of directors. To those who chose not to apply, I hope your interest continues to grow. In the meantime, get



Jay Sage,  
JGSCV's  
October  
speaker on  
DNA  
Testing for  
Genealogy

### NEXT MEETING

**Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> 7:00-9:00 PM**

### Jewish Surnames

Warren Blatt, Managing Director of JewishGen, will explain the origins, types and etymologies of Jewish Surnames. **SPECIAL DAY and TIME!**

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

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## 2015 JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

involved with some JGSCV projects. We are as strong as our members and the more who get involved, the healthier the society! While institutional legacy is important, bringing in new members to the board is very healthy for the organization. We have added new members consistently over the decade. The 2015 Nominations Committee has recommended 5 candidates for the slate. See page 14 for more information. Next year, only three original board members will remain on the JGSCV Board: Debra Kay-Blatt, Warren Blatt and me.

As I mentioned in September's president's letter, our sister society JGSLA published a book, *Jews in the Great War: Family Histories Retold*, based on the World War I centennial commemoration from the IAJGS 2014 conference. Sandy Malek, president of JGSLA, will be at the November 2<sup>nd</sup> JGSCV meeting to discuss the book, and for a contribution of \$20 (black and white) or \$36 (color) to JGSLA you will receive a copy of the book. To read more see page 9.

Since January, we have been running a series of articles by members on their own experiences or research into their ancestor's experiences to commemorate the centennial of World War I and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II—holocaust stories are part of World War II. If you have some information on a relative who served during one of the two World Wars, we need to hear from you with your stories! Thus far, Werner Frank, Sarah Applebaum, Barbara Algaze, Joanne Cadis, Hal Bookbinder, Allan Linderman, Stephen Weinstein, and Dorothy Drilich have shared their stories. This month's story beginning on page 10 is by JGSCV founding member Harold Arkoff and his service during WW II. How about you?

October started JGSCV's membership renewal for 2016. We already have 31 renewals. As usual, our December meeting will include a drawing for 10 fantastic genealogical gifts for those who are eligible. Eligibility consists of renewing or joining for 2016 and attending that meeting. See page 17 for a 2016 membership form which will also be available at the meetings. Remember Chanukah is approaching and a membership to JGSCV is a gift they will remember all year long!

Last month we started a new, year long series on "Practicing Safe Computing" by Hal Bookbinder. See page 13 for this month's topic.

Our November 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting is on Monday night from 7:00pm to 9:00pm with Warren Blatt, JGSCV founding member and Managing Director of JewishGen talking on: Jewish Surnames: The History of Jewish surnames including origins, types, and etymologies. Our traveling library with Categories A and B will be available starting at 6:30 p.m.

Looking forward to seeing you on Monday evening November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

*Jan Meisels Allen*



*Giving thanks for our families, friends and the generations that came before us.*



## Holocaust Database

The International Tracing service (ITS) located in Bad-Arolsen, Germany has begun putting its Holocaust-era archive online. This new online archive includes photos from concentrations camps and other historical documents. The materials are available online at no cost.

Thus far only 50,000 images out of 30 million documents have been posted. The online documents were inscribed onto the UNESCO "Memory of the World" register. The first three collections published are photos of personal objects taken from prisoners in the concentration camps; chosen collection on the death marches; and files from the Child Search Branch taken immediately after liberation.



ITS was founded as a tracing service after World War II with the intent to reunify survivors with their families. Today it is a research archive. Original url:

<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2015/10/07/holocaust-era-archive-places-thousands-of-documents-online>

History remembers only the celebrated;  
genealogy remembers them all.

- Laurence Overmire, *One Immigrant's Legacy*,

## IAJGS 2016 Seattle: Call for Submissions

For those of you who have been entertaining the idea of submitting a presentation proposal for the 2016 IAJGS Conference in Seattle, the Program Committee has begun accepting proposals for presentations at the conference in August 2016. All the information you need to get started is in the [Abstract Submission page](#) on the Conference Web site.

The 36th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in Seattle from August 7 to 12, 2016. This annual gathering brings together family researchers, academics, historians, and a wide variety of individuals from around the world who cherish the heritage and the future of the Jewish people.

*Please note the submissions deadline is December 15, 2015, just two months from now.*

## Zap the Grandma Gap

is a genealogy workbook for kids ages 6 to 11 by Janet Hovorka. The Jewish edition includes the author's thanks to Schelly Dardashti and Daniel Horowitz, Jewish genealogists who both consulted.

The Page Three editor took the liberty of changing the age group for this series. There is even a family reunion edition. Hanukkah gifts, anyone?

<https://zapthegrandmagap.com/>

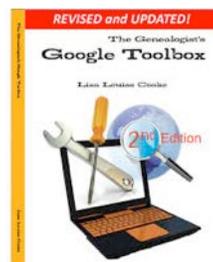
## Google Gets a Guide for Genies

Last month we noted ways to expand your use of Google. Lisa Louise Cooke, founder of Genealogy Gems, a genealogy and family history multi-media company is the author of "The Genealogist's Google Toolbox," a multi-media guide designed to teach us how to use all the capabilities of Google in your searches.

Lisa is the producer and host of "Genealogy Gems Podcast," the popular online genealogy audio show, as well as the "Family History: Genealogy Made Easy" podcast. Her podcast episodes bring genealogy news, research strategies, expert interviews and inspiration to genealogists.

A revised edition of "The Genealogist's Google Toolbox" has been released this year.

More info at <http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/the-genealogist-s-google-toolbox-2nd-edition-by-lisa-louise-cooke-p438.php>



Also available at Amazon and other outlets. If you have used this tool, please let us know what you enjoyed, or write a review.



# 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, November 2, 2015 from 7:00-9:00 PM**

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

## The Topic: "Jewish Surnames" Their History Origins, Types, and Etymologies

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.

**Speaker: Warren Blatt**, Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief, JewishGen, ([www.jewishgen.org](http://www.jewishgen.org)), an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage and founding member and board member of JGSCV. In 2004, Warren received the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) Lifetime Achievement Award. He is the author of *Resources for Jewish Genealogy in the Boston Area*; and co-author of *Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy*. Warren has over 25 years of research experience with Russian and Polish Jewish records, and is the author of the "JewishGen



*FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions about Jewish Genealogy*," as well as many other JewishGen InfoFiles.

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. Join now for 2016! Light refreshments will be served.

# JGSCV UPDATES

## JGSCV Welcomes New Member ROZ GOLD

**LIBRARY:** Use JGSCV's library. The permanent JGSCV library is located at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Their address and hours are posted on our website. We have over 300 books and a number of journals from around the world!

**WEBSITE:** Use the resources—over 350—on the JGSCV website: [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org)

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 click on the Amazon graphic (like the one here). This takes you to the same page you 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 JGSCV founding member, Werner Frank, waiting to field your individual questions and provide one-to-one help until the meeting begins. The SCHMOOZING CORNER will open at 6:40 PM on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### 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 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301

**Remember the Next JGSCV Meeting  
is MONDAY, November 2 from 7:00-9:00 PM**

# DNA Testing for Genealogy

By Jan Meisels Allen

Our October 11 program was *DNA Testing for Genealogy* by Jay Sage. The program was excellent: witty, informative, understandable, and relevant! Jay 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* (copies are located in JGSCV's permanent library collection located at the Agoura Hills Library). 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, Jay worked as a research physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

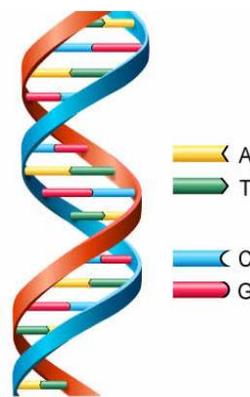
## DNA Testing: What It Can Answer

Jay stated that genetic testing can answer some—but a very limited number of—genealogical questions that documents and family stories cannot. In Jay's opinion, most DNA testing for genealogy is useless and a "waste of money," but it can be fun. He recommended it for two situations: when one has a specific hypothesis to test concerning a relationship between two individuals or if one has an "end of the line" person and wants to get a sample for possible future use. Jay believes that if money is an issue, it is better spent on a subscription to Ancestry.com or MyHeritage.com.

## Biology of DNA

Jay reviewed the cell and its genetic components. The structure of genetic material is a double helix of two strings comprised of four chemical bases: A=adenine; T=thymine;

C=cytosine; and G=guanine. The bases are paired A with T and C with G. Other combinations repel each other. Ninety-nine point nine percent of DNA is identical in all humans—but that leaves 3 million differences. All but identical twins are, therefore, genetically unique.



DNA is found in two places in cells: in the nucleus and in units called mitochondria. Mitochondrial DNA (mt-DNA) plays no role in inheritance. In the nucleus, there are 46 separate strands of DNA called chromosomes.

Twenty-two occur in pairs (44 chromosomes) that carry the same genes, one each from the father and the mother. The remaining two chromosomes are the "sex" chromosomes, called X and Y. Females have two X chromosomes, one from each parent. Males have one X from the mother and one Y from the father. During normal cell replication, all 46 chromosomes duplicate essentially exactly.

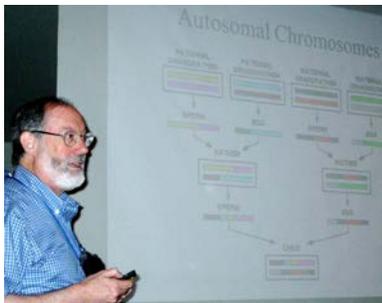
In the formation of gametes (eggs and sperm) however, chromosome pairs swap sections, producing new chromosomes that contains parts from each parent (and thus from many earlier ancestors). With eggs, this happens with all 23 pairs, including the two X chromosomes. Sperm, however, get either the X or the Y chromosome. An X sperm produces a female child; a Y sperm produces a male child. Since a male receives an unmixed Y chromosome from

his father, who received it from his father, who received it from his father, etc., the Y chromosome is relatively easy to trace. All children receive their mitochondrial DNA unmixed from their mother, who received it from her mother, etc. This makes the mt-DNA, like the Y-DNA, relatively easy to trace.

### Mutations

If DNA were perfect, we would all have the same Y-DNA and mt-DNA. Mutations in that DNA create variety and make genetic genealogy possible. The reasons for mutations are multiple: random chemical errors, radiation, and environmental toxins. There are two types of mutations that Jay discussed: SNPs and STRs.

A SNP (pronounced “snip”) is a single nucleotide polymorphism, a fancy name denoting a change in a single base, such as an A changing to a G. SNP mutations in mt-DNA occur once in ~35,000 generations. To see a



mutation in five generations, 7,000 markers must be tested (there are only 16,569 bases in the mt-DNA, compared to 60 million in the Y

chromosome). SNP mutations in chromosomal DNA are very rare, occurring at a rate of once in 50 million generations per base. As there are 3 billion bases, however, there would be on average 60 SNP mutations per generation.

STR stands for Short Tandem Repeat. Chromosomal DNA contains segments with repeating sequences, such as CATGCATGCATGCATG (four occurrences of CATG). An STR mutation denotes a situation in which there is a change in the number of repeats (e.g., from four to three or five occurrences). Y-DNA testing looks at STR mutations, which occur relatively “fast”, once in about 500 generations. Thus, 100 markers need

to be tested to see a mutation, on average, in five generations.

### Autosomal DNA (Paired Chromosomes)

As described earlier, the 22 paired chromosomes (called “autosomal”) randomly exchange DNA segments (a process called “recombination”) during the formation of each sperm and egg. Unlike Y-DNA and mt-DNA tests, autosomal tests provide information beyond direct-male or direct-female lines; the autosomal DNA contains a random mixture of the DNA of all previous generations, equally through males and females. Because recombination causes radical changes in the DNA in each generation—changes not limited to rare mutations—it is much harder to draw reliable conclusions from the results, and a completely different kind of analysis is required. In comparing two test results, one has to look at (1) the total amount of common DNA and (2) the lengths of the longest common segments. More DNA in common and longer matching segments imply a closer relationship.

### Interpreting the Test Results

When two people with a suspected relationship based on other information are found to have matching Y-DNA or mt-DNA, one can be quite confident that they are, in fact, biologically related within a recent time frame. When they do not match, a conclusion that they are not biologically related is weaker, since by random chance there may have been a larger-than-usual number of mutations. Jay showed an example of a first cousin once-removed (five generational steps) whose Y-DNA has three differences from his, though only one difference would be expected on average. In this case, the match is still close enough to confirm the known family relationship.

As an example of using Y-DNA tests, Jay worked through the now-famous DNA analysis of the Jefferson-Hemmings family. There were long-time “rumors” that President Thomas Jefferson fathered children with his slave Sally Hemmings, including her youngest son, Eston

Hemmings. There were others who asserted that Jefferson's brother-in-law was the father of Hemmings's children. In a separate story, another person, Thomas Woodson, claimed that Jefferson was his father.

Y-DNA tests were performed on direct-male descendants of the various parties. The match between the Hemmings and Jefferson DNA definitely established that a Jefferson (but not necessarily Thomas Jefferson, since all male Jefferson share the same Y chromosome) was the father of Eston Hemmings. The other parties did not have matching DNA. That might lead one to conclude that they were not related, but Jay pointed out that such a conclusion would be invalid if a "non-paternity" event (the supposed father was not actually the father) occurred anywhere in the line from the historical party to his supposed direct-male descendant. Such non-paternity events arose not only from extramarital relations but also from adoptions, which were often arranged informally and not always known in later generations.

Simply looking at all the people reported as having matching DNA is not generally very useful. The problem is that there is a chance that people will have matching DNA by accident (things don't always happen in the most probable way). As more people get tested, more false matches will occur. Jay showed an example of reported matches in one of his Y-DNA tests. No one on the list had the same surname, as direct-male-line relatives normally would. If any of those people are, in fact, related, the common ancestor is most likely from a time before the adoption of surnames, much farther back than the closeness of match would suggest.

Autosomal tests for Jews have an additional problem. The Jewish community is highly endogamous (i.e., there are repeated marriages within a small community). As a result, the tests tend to suggest relationships that are much closer than they really are. It is not unusual for

lists of autosomal matches to include thousands of people. Jay's wife and her known cousin have more than 6,000 matches (they could not possibly have that many close relatives).

### **DNA Testing Companies**

There are three major companies that do DNA testing for genealogy:

- Family Tree DNA (ftdna.com)
- 23and Me (23andMe.com)
- Ancestry (dna.ancestry.com)

All three do autosomal ("Family Finder") tests. Today only Family Tree DNA does Y-DNA or mt-DNA tests. The largest Jewish database is on FamilyTree DNA.

Jay reviewed how a test is ordered, how a sample is taken, and the prices of the various tests. The DNA companies have specials at national conferences and at certain times throughout the year. All charge \$99 for the autosomal test. FTDNA has combinations of tests, and sometimes there is a discount for multiple types of tests ordered at the same time. Once the DNA testing company, such as Family Tree DNA, has a sample, additional tests can be performed without having to provide another sample. This is important if you are having an elderly relative take a test; at a later date, a new type of test can be ordered, or a previous test can be upgraded (for example augmenting a Y-DNA test from 37 to 67 markers).

A complete list of companies offering DNA tests can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/dna-companies>

### **Warning and Summary**

If you are not prepared for the possibility of learning something uncomfortable, such as non-paternity event, do not do DNA testing.

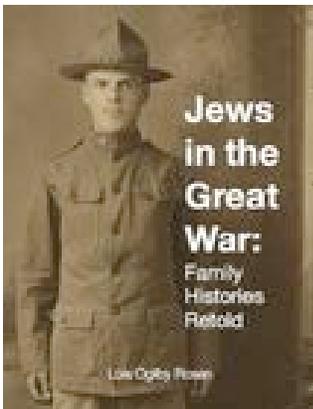
DNA testing in no way supplants traditional genealogical research. A PDF file with the slides from Jays' presentation may be found at: <http://sagefamily.org/DNA for Genealogy.pdf>.

# Jews in the Great War: Family Histories Retold

**By Jan Meisels Allen**

Did you attend the IAJGS 2014 International Conference on Jewish Genealogy in Salt Lake City? If you did you saw a gallery of submitted World War I photographs exhibited in the main hallway. At that time attendees and non-attendees were invited to submit and share their World War I genealogical stories with the intent of publishing a book with the photographs and stories. That book is now available from our sister JGS, JGSLA. Both the exhibit at the conference, and this book were curated and edited by JGSLA board member Lois Ogilby Rosen.

I have seen both the black and white and color editions of the book and they are BEAUTIFUL! With Chanukah coming up, either would be a lovely gift for someone who is interested in history and or genealogy. Don't forget to buy one for your own library! They would also make lovely gifts for birthdays and Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts. If you decide to purchase the book from

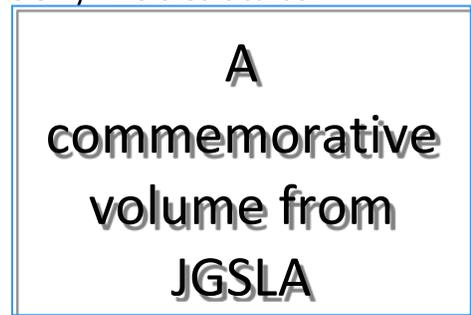


Amazon, don't forget to go to the JGSCV website, [www.jgscv.org](http://www.jgscv.org) and scroll down on any page to click on the Amazon link so that JGSCV receives a marketing fee. The book will be available from Amazon in about six-eight weeks.

November, 2015

As I mentioned in last month's President's Letter in *Venturing Into Our Past*, JGSLA President, Sandy Malek will be attending our November 2, 2015 meeting (Monday night 7:00-9:00PM) and speaking about the book before Warren Blatt gives his presentation. Sandy will provide the book as a gift to anyone who makes donation to JGSLA at either the \$20 (black and white) or \$36 (color) level. Cash and checks only—no credit cards.

This



is a

commemorative volume, including all of the submissions at the 2014 IAJGS conference in Salt Lake City. Three JGSCV members, Barbara Algaze, Werner Frank and Andrea Massion are contributors to the compendium of stories, pictures and family trees. The book is 8 1/2" x 11" paperback with a perfect binding, and 148 pages. If you can't wait until the November 2<sup>nd</sup> JGSCV meeting, they are available now directly from JGSLA's publisher at <https://www.lulu.com/shop/search.ep?contributorid=1372473>. The black and white edition is currently selling at a discounted rate of \$18.28. The full color edition is currently selling at \$36.30. Shipping and tax will be added. Proceeds above their costs go to JGSLA. In addition to Amazon, the books are also listed on <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

# Harold Arkoff's World War II Story

By Harold Arkoff, JGSCV Founding Member

Now that I am 90 years young I am looking back on a long, interesting life including my World War II service. I was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa, a small city of 20,000 in Northwest Iowa. My parents were Jewish immigrants from Eastern Russia. My father was born in Mogelov, Belarus and was serving as a corporal in Czar Nicholas' Russian Army when in 1904 he decided to immigrate to the United States. My mother was the only daughter of a Lithuanian rabbi who supported his wife, six sons, and a daughter working as a *shochet* on cattle farms of rich barons in Courland, in Northern Lithuania and Latvia. With three brothers living in the United States and two in South Africa, in 1913 he decided to move to the United States for personal freedom and a future for his family.

My grandfather decided to join his brothers in Fort Dodge, Iowa where there were 28 Jewish families. The men held their weekly *minyan* in a rented three room Jewish community center on the second floor above Constantine's Olympia Ice Cream and Candy Store owned by a Greek family. Living in a city with a small Jewish population, high holidays were celebrated in the lodge rooms of the Catholic Knights of Columbus and a rabbi was imported for the occasion from a Cincinnati Ohio yeshiva.

## America Enters World War II

I was 16 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Most all of the Jewish families in Fort Dodge had family members in Europe that were feeling Hitler's atrocities and worried about their loved ones. My mother's brother, Itsak Lurie, was somewhere in Latvia when the Nazi's came through in 1942. He, his wife Chaya and their five children had not been heard from for months and by 1943 they were feared to be

Holocaust victims. They were last heard from in Poland on the run from the Nazis. My father had not heard from his siblings still in Russia.

At 17, I graduated high school in May 1943 and my two older brothers were already in the service. I knew that when I turned 18, I would be drafted as the Selective Service Act required all males 18 and

older to serve. The Army and Navy had a Specialized Training Reserve Program for 17 year olds where you could "pick what you wanted to do". I enlisted in the Army the week after



I graduated from high school with my parents' permission.

**The author at age 18**

The war was accelerating and the U.S .was finally going on the offensive in the Pacific where the Army needed fighting infantry men. On September 30, 1943, thirty days after my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, I was sent to Camp Fannin, Texas for 17 weeks of tough Infantry basic training.

## War in the Pacific

I was assigned to the Cape Cleare, a CIB type freighter originally built in 1943 and operated briefly as a cargo ship in the southwest Pacific before being converted to a troop ship. It was only 417 feet long, 6711 gross tons carrying 1,791 soldiers. We slept on canvas bunks, one on top of each other—five bunks high. There

were only 20-24 inches of space between the *bottom* of your bunk and the bunk above you.

This was my first sea voyage and we sailed out of San Francisco and under the Golden Gate Bridge. The sea was rough when we hit the open sea. I suffered sea sickness for the first few days of the voyage but then I was fine and enjoyed the rest of the voyage. We headed south and the sea was quite calm. We were not informed where we were going, but after a week we were hitting tropical waters and sailing southwest at a slow 14 knots per hour. We saw very few ships and then only on the horizon. We knew that Japanese submarines might be in the area. We had the King Neptune ceremony: An initiation rite of many navies for sailors first crossing of the equator. At night the ship was blacked out but on deck you could look down in the water and it was beautiful with fluorescent fish, the wake of the ship and fresher air than down below.

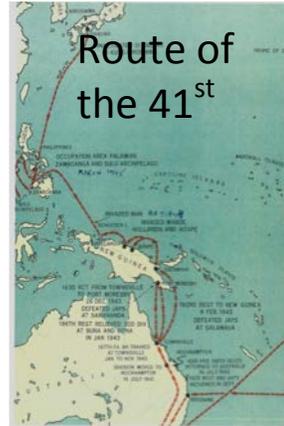
### **Arrival in the South Pacific**

In late May, 1944—after 21 days—we anchored in Milne Bay, New Guinea. The Japanese had taken most of the big Island of New Guinea, including Milne Bay area, except for a small area around Port Moresby near Australia. In 1943, Australian Army troops aided by two American Army Divisions finally stopped the Japanese advance and pushed them out of southern and Southeast New Guinea, including the area around Milne Bay.

I was assigned to the 41<sup>st</sup> infantry Division as a battle casualty replacement. The 41<sup>st</sup> was the first U.S. Army divisions to go into action anywhere in World War II. The 41<sup>st</sup> had just finished driving the Japanese from Hollandia in Northern New Guinea and were then in the early stages of the bloody Biak Island campaign. When I joined the company I was assigned to a machine gun crew that was near one of the three airstrips on the Island. General Douglas MacArthur wanted Biak Islands' airfields so

they could be used in bombing and retaking the Philippines.

The Japanese were dug into caves and could see us as we landed from landing ships and advanced along the roads. We lost hundreds of our men in wiping out the Japanese. After about three months of heavy fighting we killed or captured most of the 10,000 to 12,000 Japanese that had been on Biak Island and were searching for stragglers



in daily patrols.

### **Biak Island**

Cannon Company 162<sup>nd</sup>, had been particularly hard hit by casualties and I was transferred to Cannon Company after about four weeks and assigned to a 105 mm infantry howitzer gun crew. The first soldier killed in action in Cannon Company was a Jewish lad from Brooklyn named Herman Schecter.

### **Under Attack in the Philippines**

After the Biak action was mostly completed by September, General MacArthur was getting ready to fulfill his pledge to return to the Philippines. In February 1945 we boarded transport ships and were deployed to Mindoro Island in the Philippines to be in close reserve for fighting now going on other Philippine Islands. Finally we learned that our next mission was to retake the big southern-most Philippine Island, Mindanao from the Japanese starting on March 10, 1945.

We landed under shellfire on the beach at Zamboang, a rifle company from our LC1 at 9:34 AM, 19 minutes after our regiment's first wave. We advanced under some enemy fire toward our first objective: Wolfe field, an airfield 60 yards inland. We dug in across the strip to secure the beach road, regimental

headquarters and our supply dump. That afternoon, Japanese guns fired down from the hills at us and several in our platoon suffered shell fragment wounds.

The next morning, March 11, Japanese field artillery flamed a gas dump and ammo dump about 200 yards east of the 162<sup>nd</sup> command post and only about 50 yards for our Company positions. We had to leave our fox holes because of the heat of the fire and danger of more explosions.

The next night, March 12, about midnight, eight Japanese raided the supply dumps to try and burn those gasoline drums which their field artillery had failed to burn. These eight Japanese crossed the airstrip and Zambo Road and touch off those drums. They also mined the road near us. Spotting a Cannon Company position, they pinned down our men with a light .25 caliber "Woodpecker" machine gun. They fired point blank at us and we fired back with our rifles and carbines and drove them off. The next morning a Japanese lay dead only five feet from our hole and we found three more dead just 30 yards up the road.

The Zamboanga campaign expanded into the rest of Mindinao and down the islands of the Sulu Archipelago which extended almost to Borneo. In all, the 41st Division suffered about 6,000 casualties during the war.

### Japan

The end of May, 1945 I was sent to Brisbane, Australia to attend officer's school. In August 1945 I returned to my regiment which was training for the invasion of Japan on November 1. Our 41<sup>st</sup> Division was supposed to be one of 11 American Army and Marine Divisions that was to invade the Japanese home island of Kyushu. Nothing could have been better for us than when we dropped the first Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and followed up a few days later with a second bombing at Nagasaki. The atomic strikes saved many lives and shortened the war. The Japanese surrendered, The War was over!

November, 2015

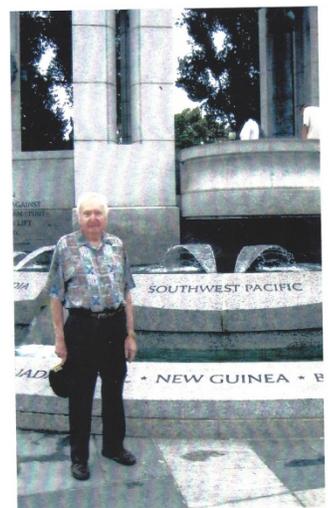
In mid-September we boarded the U.S.S. Sherburne and arrived in Hiro-Kure, Japan to begin our part of the Japanese Occupation. I returned to the states via San Francisco the end of January 1946 to receive my honorable discharge and return to college.

### Post War Reflections

I started wondering what had become of my mother's and father's families that were left behind in Europe during the war. My mother and her brothers had lost track of their brother Itsak, who stayed in Lithuania with his wife and five children. To this date I have never found any information and can only assume they were lost in the Holocaust. My father had a number of siblings in Belarus and the Ukraine with whom they lost contact. Two of his brothers had moved to Odessa before world War I and at least one of them lost a daughter and a wife when the Germans came through Odessa in October 1941 and locked thousands of Jews in a warehouse and set it on fire.

There is an old saying, "may you live in interesting times". Born to immigrant Jewish parents who were seeking freedom and opportunity; living through the boom times of the late twenties to the depression of the thirties; my own active participation in World War II in the Pacific; my postwar work in the broadcasting and publishing field; my long happy marriage and raising a family surely made my long life an interesting journey. It was a unique time in the history of this wonderful country.

*Right: Harold Arkoff at the WW II Memorial, Washington, DC*



# Credit Reporting Agencies

By Hal Bookbinder

My October "Safe Computing" article suggested you contact the credit reporting agencies if you have been "phished" and feel



that your identity may have been compromised. This article covers how to do this and what you might request.

There are three major credit reporting agencies in the U.S.: TransUnion, Experian and Equifax. By law you are entitled to one free credit report from each every year. To get your free credit report, go to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). You will be quizzed to ensure your identity. For example, you might be asked the amount of your monthly mortgage or car payment and be given a number of ranges.

You can obtain any or all of your three credit reports. While there are some differences, for the most part they are redundant. So, what I do is put a reminder on my calendar at four month intervals to get one of the three credit reports, keeping me aware throughout the year. Check the report carefully for accuracy. It will provide you with instructions for contesting erroneous information.

There are commercial sites, with the words "free" in them which look a lot like the official free site above. Using some will start a monthly charge while others are truly free and rely on up-selling you additional services. If you do sign up for a credit monitoring service, be sure you know what you are getting for your

money. And, check your credit card statements carefully for any resultant charges.

If you are concerned that your identity may have been compromised, consider establishing a "security freeze" with each of the three credit reporting agencies. With a credit freeze, the agency will not approve credit, loans and services being approved in your name without your consent. However, this may delay, interfere with or even prohibit the timely approval of legitimate requests for new credit.

The nominal fee for a security freeze is typically waived if you are over 65 or have submitted a complaint with a law enforcement agency stating that you believe you are a victim of identity theft. You can later temporarily or permanently suspend the security freeze. Again there is a nominal fee which is typically waived if you have an active complaint.

A less intrusive alternative is a "fraud alert". This requests that the potential credit grantor verify your identification before proceeding with the transaction. A fraud alert is free and lasts 90 days. If you request a fraud alert of any of the three companies they are required to notify the other two. (However, I would verify that the others have recorded the alert). A fraud alert can be renewed for 90 days. It can be extended to one or seven years if you have submitted a complaint to a law enforcement agency.

**See Next Page For  
More Information**

Contact Information for the Credit Reporting Companies:

- TransUnion, <http://www.transunion.com>, 1-800-680-7289,
- Experian, <http://www.experian.com>, 1- 888-397-3742,
- Equifax, <http://www.equifax.com>, 1-888-766-0008

To obtain your free annual credit report:

<https://www.annualcreditreport.com>

For more information:

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0155-free-credit-reports>

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/creditreports>

<https://www.ftc.gov/faq/consumer-protection/get-my-free-credit-report>

*This is the second of a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a former President of JGSLA and IAJGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award and is very skilled in the use of online websites.*

## Forthcoming JGSCV Elections

As per the JGSCV Bylaws, a Nominating Committee recommended the slate of individuals below to fill the five positions for election to two-year positions on the JGSCV board effective January 2016. The Nominating Committee was chaired by Hal Bookbinder and included board member Rosalie Bell and general member Patricia Fuller. The terms of four of the nine existing board members are expiring at the end of this year. One of these, Dorothy Drilich has decided not to seek reelection. The bylaws permit 6 to 12 elected members. While we have recently functioned with 9 elected board members, on October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Board voted to expand the board to 10 elected members. The five candidates the Nominations Committee recommended are:

- Warren Blatt
- Andrea Maisson
- Marilyn Silva

- Allan Linderman
- Israel Perel

Three of the five nominees currently serve on the board: Warren Blatt, Allan Linderman and Israel Perel. Andrea Massion

currently works with Allan on *Venturing Into Our Past* and has been a member of JGSCV since 2014. Marilyn Silva has been a member of JGSCV since 2010.

According to the Bylaws, anyone else wishing to be nominated to the Board can do so during the November 2, 2015 meeting of the Society. An individual may nominate him/herself or another. No second is necessary. Nominees must have been members of the Society for at least one year. Any person that is nominated from the floor must be present and orally agree to serve on the Board if elected, or if not present must have signed a written statement indicating their willingness to serve if elected. This statement must be available for inspection at this meeting. After this solicitation, nominations for the Board are closed. The names of all nominees with brief biographies will be published in the December issue of this newsletter. Elections will then be held at the December 13, 2015 meeting.

According to the JGSCV bylaws the general membership votes for the persons to serve on the board, but the board members decide on the roles of the board members. At the January board meeting the decision of responsibilities will be decided and reported in the following (February 2016) newsletter.

# 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

<b>November 2, Monday 7:00-9:00 PM</b>	<b>Warren Blatt</b> <i>Jewish Surnames</i> 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.
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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 Marion Werle *Never Give Up - Strategies for Taking Your Genealogy Research to the Next Level and Finding the Previously Unfindable*

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

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 TBA

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

## Randy Schoenberg at Etz Chaim



Temple Etz Chaim is pleased to host E. Randol (Randy) Schoenberg on December 2nd at 6 PM. Randy will be presenting his story of triumph in his fight for a Jewish family's prized Gustav Klimt painting seized by the Nazis. The battle began in 1998 when 82-year-old Maria Altmann approached Randy, a young lawyer and grandson of her close friend, about trying to recover her family's art from Austria. He took on Maria's case, which ultimately went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court where Randy successfully sued Austria for the return of the famous Woman In Gold ("Adele Bloch-Bauer I") painting. The event is free but seating is limited. Please RSVP to [dena@templeetzchaim.org](mailto:dena@templeetzchaim.org).

Randy is the president of the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, an avid genealogist, a board member of JewishGen and co-founder of its Austria-Czech Special Interest Group and volunteer curator for Geni.com.

A reminder that the (US) National Archives Virtual Genealogy Fair is scheduled October 21-22, 2015. Times are Eastern Time starting at 10:00 AM. schedule of presentations see: <http://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair/>. Online viewing and chatting or to catch up later at the National Archives YouTube channel: <http://tinyurl.com/p8s2umu>

**Remember the Next JGSCV Meeting**  
**is MONDAY, November 2**  
**7:00-9:00 PM**

# Kristallnacht: Night of Broken Glass 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary November 9-10

This year marks the 77<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht. Kristallnacht, "Night of Crystal," is often referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass" took place on November 9 and 10, 1938 throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia that were occupied by German troops. At least 91 Jews were killed in the attacks, and 30,000 were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. Jewish homes, hospitals, and schools were ransacked. The attackers demolished buildings with sledgehammers. Over 1,000 synagogues were burned (95 in Vienna alone) and over 7,000 Jewish businesses destroyed or damaged.

According to the Free Dictionary, Herschel Grynszpan a 17-year-old Jew, assassinated the third secretary at the German embassy in Paris on November 7, 1938, to avenge the expulsion of his parents and 15,000 other Polish Jews to German concentration camps. This gave the Nazis the excuse they were waiting for and Goebbels urged Storm Troopers to stage violent reprisals-which resulted in Kristallnacht.



The shattered stained glass windows of the Zerrennerstrasse synagogue after its destruction on Kristallnacht. Pforzheim, Germany, ca. November 10, 1938. — *Stadtarchiv Pforzheim*

Kristallnacht marked the transition in Nazi policy. It was the first violent pogrom (riot) on Western European soil in hundreds of years. Immediately after Kristallnacht, a fine of one billion marks was levied, not upon the criminals, but upon the victims, the Jewish community of Germany. Nazi policy had now moved into the overt destruction of all Jewish life in the Third Reich.

To read more about Kristallnacht see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristallnacht> and <http://tinyurl.com/29k38qn> for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum write up.

While there are commemorations throughout the US and other countries, it is best to Google for this to find out what is happening closest to you to commemorate Kristallnacht.

## Local Area Kristallnacht Commemorations

Among the commemorations in southern California are:

- Loyola Marymount November 9, 2015 6: 30 pm Loyola Marymount Campus <http://tinyurl.com/obwbutx>
- Chapman University Rogers Center for Holocaust Education and Fish Interfaith Center November 10, 2014 7:00 p.m. <https://www.chapman.edu/research-and-institutions/holocaust-education/rodgers-center/kristallnacht-commemoration/>.
- The Jewish Federation of Santa Barbara is holding a Kristallnacht commemoration Monday November 9 at 7:30 p.m. showing Run Boy Run winner of multiple Film Festival Audience Awards. <http://jewishsantabarbara.org/community-calendar/kristallnacht-commemoration> The Santa Barbara Federation is also observing a Kristallnacht Observance on November 8, 2015 starting at 1:00 p.m. <http://jewishsantabarbara.org/community-calendar/kristallnacht-commemoration-at-jewish-federations-bronfman-family-jcc>.



**2016 Membership/Renewal Form**  
**Jewish Genealogical Society**  
**of the**  
**Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV)\***

\*Member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS)

[www.JGSCV.org](http://www.JGSCV.org)

**Dues paid now are good through December 2016**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check one:

This is a New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Single \$ 25.00 \_\_\_\_\_ + \$1.00\*\* Family\* \$30.00 \_\_\_\_\_ + \$2.00\*\*

\*family defined as two people living in the same household

\*\* \$1 per person is a voluntary donation to the IAJGS Stern Award, granted annually when it recognizes institutions for outstanding work in the creation and availability of resources for Jewish Genealogy.

Additional voluntary contributions:

Library Acquisition Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Programs Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for either fund \$5.00)

Make check out to: JGSCV Mail application to: Helene Rosen,  
28912 Fountainwood St.  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zipcode + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Day telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Evening telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Talents that you have to share (accounting skills, language skills, computer skills, translation, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_