

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

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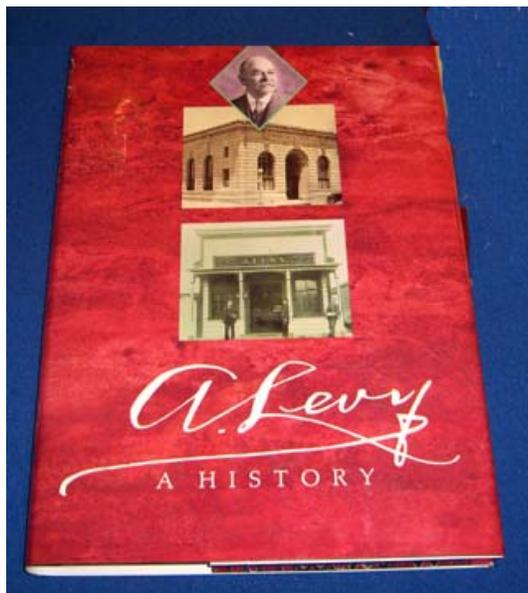
**SPEAKER CHARLES JOHNSON ARRANGES HIS BOOKS AND CHATS WITH JGSCV MEMBERS**

## Charles Johnson speaks to JGSCV....

Guest lecturer Charles Johnson is the Librarian and Archivist of the Ventura County Museum of History and Art. Providing examples of the museum's holdings and publications, Mr. Johnson gave an illustrated lecture of the history of Ventura County and its various archival holdings. Of particular interest to JGSCV were illustrations of Jewish pioneers such as Abraham Levy, founder of the A. Levy Bank.

Among the treasures brought to our meeting was an 1883 photo album of vintage family pictures which was inscribed "Token of Affection" by Lucy Levy to her friend Mrs. H. Cerf.

Mr. Johnson offered attendees a copy of the Ventura County Historical Society Publication



## History of A. Levy Bank

"Ventura County, Garden of the World." This volume recorded the landowners of the county during the period 1878-1879. A copy will also be placed in our permanent library at Agoura Hills Public Library and available in our traveling library at our meetings.

## President's Message...

There is a phenomenal growth in interest for genealogy and family history. A 2005 poll performed by Market Strategies, Inc. and MyFamily.com, Inc. shows 73% of Americans are interested in discovering their family history. This reflects a 13% increase over a similar study in 2000.

JGSCV acceptance by our community reflects this interest since in a few short months we went from "zero" to over 100 members! To keep us strong we need to continue to build our membership ranks. We look to you to refer friends to become members of our society. Do invite them to attend our meetings. We have great programs planned for the remainder of the year.

Looking forward to seeing you at the March meeting.

Jan Meisels Allen

**SEE PAGE 3 FOR SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING JGSCV MEETING**



Jewish Genealogical Society (New York)  
is hosting the  
26th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish  
Genealogy

August 13-18, 2006  
New York Marriott Marquis Hotel

Make your plans now to attend this exciting  
conference. Check the website for attendance and  
hotel registration details at [www.jgsny2006.org](http://www.jgsny2006.org).

The kickoff session will take place Sunday  
evening, August 13, 2006 with keynote speaker  
Dr. Allen Weinstein, Ninth Archivist of the  
United States.

## ABOUT JGSCV.....

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Conejo Valley  
and Ventura County meets once a month on a  
Sunday. Meetings are oriented to the needs of the  
novice as well as the more experienced  
genealogist. Members share materials, research  
methods and ideas, as well as research success or  
failures. Members have access to the JGSCV  
library located on a special shelf at the Agoura  
Hills Public Library.

Members also receive our monthly newsletter  
which is circulated by email. Editorial and  
feature articles, as well as tips for pursuit of  
genealogical research are welcome. Send such  
material as a file attachment or message via email  
to [newslettereditor@jgscv.org](mailto:newslettereditor@jgscv.org)

2006 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and  
\$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send  
appropriate amount in check made out to JGSCV  
and addressed to Richard Munitz at 29633  
Windsong Lane, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.

## RESEARCH TIPS.....

### IMMIGRANT ARRIVALS

Ports of entry for most of our immigrant  
ancestors are New York, Boston, Baltimore,  
Philadelphia, Galveston and San Francisco as  
well as border crossings from Canada. Free  
online Internet help is available for New York at:

[www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) (for period 1892-1924)

[www.castlegarden.org](http://www.castlegarden.org) (for period 1820-1891)

and for Galveston (1844-1948) at:

[www.tsm-elissa.org/immigration-login.htm](http://www.tsm-elissa.org/immigration-login.htm)

Information for other ports may be available  
through commercial vendors and other aids. For  
such assistance check any search engine such as  
Google and enter the name of the port modified  
by arrivals (e.g., Baltimore arrivals). For an  
excellent summary of known databases (free and  
for fee) check:

<http://home.att.net/~wee-monster/onlinelists.html>

### SURVIVORS OF THE SHOAH

With the transfer of the Survivors of the Shoah  
Foundation to the University of Southern  
California, online access to over 50,000  
testimonies is now available at:

[www.usc.edu/schools/college/vhi/](http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/vhi/) .

Privacy restrictions on the Internet limit the  
search parameters to the use of given name with  
surname initial.

### EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH RECORDS

The Jewish Family History Foundation is a  
website dedicated to the dissemination of Jewish  
records from archives in Eastern Europe. This is  
accomplished by creating translated online  
databases and digitalized images of original  
documents. This website provides information  
suitable for genealogical and academic historical  
research. The focus is primarily on the Grand  
Duchy of the Lithuania-Kingdom of Poland  
Commonwealth in the 18th century: the early  
Russian Empire Revision Lists and 1765, 1784  
census/tax lists of the Jewish communities. This  
area later became Belarus, Lithuania, Poland,  
and Ukraine, the ancestral homeland of 80  
percent of the Jews alive in the world today. See

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

# See the Documentary "The Children of Terezin"

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



Sunday, March 5, 2006 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.  
Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim  
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

Terezin was the Third Reich's "show-place," a model camp conceived for propaganda, deceiving the world into believing that the relocation of millions of Jews did not mean they were being liquidated but "merely" resettled all over Europe. Terezin was also special in producing artists and poets, part of an organized movement of resistance within the camp. The resistance was accomplished through an extensive underground network of secret activities that encouraged and taught inmates to use the power of music, poetry and painting to document and expose the façade of the "paradise ghetto."

Following the film, Stewart Bernstein, a producer of the documentary and JGSCV board member, will discuss the making of the documentary — the return to Terezin with a few survivors who were those young artists and poets participating in the underground classes and playing music in secret recitals. Stewart, has been in the entertainment industry for 30 years as a Producer, Director and Film Editor, and has twice been awarded National Emmys.

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

For more information contact [information@JGSCV.org](mailto:information@JGSCV.org) See: [www.JGSCV.org](http://www.JGSCV.org)  
Or call Jan Meisels Allen@ 818-889-6616

## Are you interested in the relevance of DNA to genealogical research?

We hear more and more about the use of DNA in the pursuit of genealogy research. Can DNA testing really help in establishing if two individuals have a common ancestry? Can it provide information regarding genetic diseases?

You can check out current thinking by reference to an excellent article in the 6 February 2006 issue of Newsweek (p. 46 - 55). Also, refer to the National Geographic Society's Genographic Project at <https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/index.html> and the relevance of DNA to Jewish genealogy at [www.jewishgen.org/dna](http://www.jewishgen.org/dna).

**Future JGSCV Meeting Dates Through June 2006**  
**All Meetings are held 2:00 - 4:00 pm at Temple Adat Elohim**  
**2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks**

**April 9, 2006** "How To Begin Your Genealogy Research-Part II- Using the Internet," Jan Meisels Allen, Debra K. Blatt and Warren Blatt. Members of the JGSCV board will try to answer your questions by a "live" demonstration on what and where to research various Internet sites so you can continue working on your own! We will also discuss how city directories and WWI and WWII records can assist in your research. Come prepared with your genealogy questions such as where or how can I find my ancestral shtetl? If I don't know the shtetl, what can I do to learn its identity? Do records exist for Jews who lived in the shtetls and where do I look? What street did my uncle live on in Brooklyn? On what ship did Bubbie emigrate? How can I order my parents' marriage certificate?

**May 7, 2006** "The Pale of Jewish Settlement, 1800-1917," Hal Bookbinder, IAJGS past president & JGSCV founding member. For more than a century, from its creation in 1800 until its elimination in 1917, the Pale was the center of World Jewry. It was the area of the western Russian Empire in which Jews were permitted. In 1880, more than 80% of our Jewish ancestors lived in the Pale of Jewish Settlement and over the next 30 years, fully one-third of these Jews gave up everything familiar to them and left for the West. This talk reviews the major events that created, defined, ended the Pale, and resulted in a huge movement of people forever redefining our Jewish history.

**June 11, 2006** "The Wayfarers," Stuart Tower will talk on his historical novel which chronicles the emigration, *on foot*, of thousands of Jews from Romania across Europe and to America during 1899-1914. In Yiddish, these wayfarers were called *fusgeyers*...they who went by foot. There will be an opportunity to buy the book at the meeting.

**CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS:**

JGSCV has initiated a project to list Jews that are buried in cemeteries located in the Conejo Valley and Ventura County. This effort is part of JewishGen's Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR). Volunteers are needed to visit five local cemeteries and record vital information of deceased individuals. If interested in assisting, please contact Frank Tessel at [frank@jgscv.org](mailto:frank@jgscv.org).

**This NEWSLETTER seeks material for publication**

Send articles, tips, advice and questions related to genealogical research to the editor@jgscv.org

**JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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