



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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

Volume 5, Issue 7

April, 2010

President's Letter:

We were enthralled with Steve Luxenberg's relating of his family secret: his mother's sister that his mother kept secret from her children and friends throughout her adult life. Steve's story of how he researched his hidden Aunt Annie's existence, using documents (birth, death and hospital records) and his interviewing skills of people who knew his mother and aunt before Annie was committed to a state mental institution for the rest of her adult life are all techniques that genealogists can use for their own research. His journey took him to imperial Russia, Depression-era Detroit, through the holocaust in the Ukraine and the Philippine war zone and back to the hospitals where Annie and many others languished in anonymity. *Annie's Ghosts*, the account of Steve's journey to unravel the family mystery and a commentary of how mental illness was treated in the US pre 1970's, is a great read, and recommended to all.

Debra Kay Blatt facilitated the schmoozing corner where you can

discuss your latest genealogical find or problem. (See photo page 5.) Remember to come to the meetings 15 minutes in advance to take advantage of this new feature! At the April 11 meeting, Warren Blatt will facilitate the Schmoozing Corner.

Judith Cohen gave the book report on *The Jewish Quarter of Philadelphia a History and Guide 1881-1930* by Harry Boonin. Philadelphia is the where Judith's grandfather immigrated. By reading the book, Judith is able to contact sources for her own genealogy and the book has inspired her to continue researching. The book is in our Traveling Library. See *JGSCV's Updates* on page 4 for more about book reports and the Traveling Library. (Photos on page 5.)

Sandy Malek, President, JGSLA, our sister JGS, gave a review of highlights for the 2010 IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, hosted by JGSLA. As this year the conference is literally in our back yard, I hope many of you will attend-if not for the full week at least for several days-it will be genealogical adventure you will love! See page 2 for more information.

We need a volunteer for the Publicity Committee. Requirements are access to Microsoft Word and a pre-determined hour each month to attach a meeting notice to a series of emails. If you have an hour each month, your JGSCV needs you.

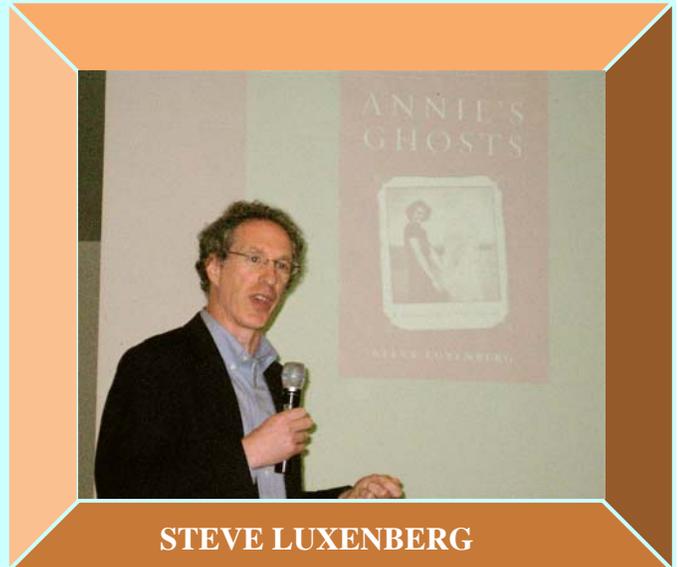
If you have not yet renewed your membership or joined JGSCV, please go to our website: www.jgscv.org to print or download a membership form and complete and submit it. We really want **you** as members! The more members we have the stronger the society.

Our April 11th Meeting is commemorating Yom Hashoah Day (Holocaust Memorial Day) by showing "Hitler's Hidden Holocaust" a documentary by the National Geographic Channel. Before the death camps were the killing fields-mass graves of executed men, women and children. The *Einsatzgruppen* (action-groups) became an organized killing machine roaming through Poland, Ukraine and Belarus murdering an estimated 1.5 million Jews and partisans prior to the birth of concentration camps. The documentary is woven together with harrowing testimonials from survivors, witnesses, and experts with rare video footage. Following the documentary, Bob Rich, American Red Cross Holocaust Tracing Services-Ventura Chapter will talk about the tracing services and how the American Red Cross assists US residents searching for information. The tracing services are free and involve partner organizations worldwide.

All programs until August 2010 are now set. Because of the IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy July 11-16, there will be no JGSCV meeting in July. See you on April 11th!

On behalf of the JGSCV Board of Directors have a Happy Passover!

Jan Meisels Allen



STEVE LUXENBERG

ABOUT JGSCV...

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County meets once a month, usually on a Sunday. Meetings are oriented to the needs of the novice as well as the more experienced genealogist. Members share materials, research methods and ideas, as well as research success or failures. Members have access to the JGSCV library located on special shelves at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter which is circulated by email.

2010 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send appropriate amount in check made out to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain the new/renewal membership form on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

FREE ONLINE FAMILY SEARCH CLASSES

The FamilySearch Family History Library is now making its popular classes available at FamilySearch.org, where anyone, anywhere can access them for free anytime. The classes have been offered on-site in Salt Lake City for years.

All of the classes can be accessed on www.familysearch.org by clicking on Free Online Classes on the home page under *Family History Library*. New on-line classes are added continually.

FamilySearch is a nonprofit organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Patrons may access FamilySearch services and resources free online or at local Family History Center (a list of local FHC's in our area are listed under "resources" on the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org)

RALPH'S COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The Ralphs Community Contribution program helps JGSCV with making contributions to us every quarter, based on the purchases made by participants in the program. Please visit our website under "notices" for the easy step-by-step instructions to register and have JGSCV benefit from your Ralphs purchases.

2010 IAJGS CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES

Mark your calendars! July 11-16, 2010 -- the 30th IAJGS Conference will be hosted by JGSLA and held at the JW Marriott Hotel at LA Live near the Staples Center in downtown LA. The JGSLA website is up at: <http://www.jgsla2010.com/> Conference registration is open and hotel reservations can be made now. Program details will be available by the end of March.

VENTURA COUNTY LIBRARY CHANGES

With the closure of the H.P. Wright Library, the Ventura County Library System has moved the Wright collection to the E.P. Foster Library in Ventura.

The Ventura County Genealogical Society collection which has been housed at the E.P. Foster library will be relocated to the Camarillo Library as of early April.

For information on address and hours please see <http://www.vencolibrary.org>

MATZEVOT FROM MT. CARMEL ONLINE

A list of approximately 300 matzevot from Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Commerce, CA (Los Angeles County) is available and can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/ye7z5jj> To request a jpg (picture), email Stephanie Weiner at Stephanie.weiner@gmail.com and include last name, first name, slide number and index card (1 or 2).

CENSUS RECORDS FREE FROM FOOTNOTE

At least through the end of March US Census records from 1860 and 1910-1930 can be accessed for free at www.footnote.com When you find a relative's record, click the "I'm Related" button for a name on the document to identify yourself as a relative and see others who've done the same. You also can see others' photos, stories and comments related to the record.

ANCESTRY'S COLLECTIONS

Ancestry.com has listed its new or improved collections (both US and International) in one handy place: <http://tinyurl.com/ye9ppt4> See more about their free webinars on page 5.



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

This meeting commemorates Yom Hashoah Day (Holocaust Memorial Day).

Sunday, April 11, 2010 1:30-3:30 p.m.

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

"Hitler's Hidden Holocaust"

A Documentary by  NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
CHANNEL

and

American Red Cross Holocaust Tracing Services

Before the death camps were the killing fields-mass graves of executed men, women and children. The *Einsatzgruppen* (German action-groups) became an organized killing machine, roaming through Poland, Ukraine and Belarus murdering an estimated 1.5 million Jews and partisans. The *Einsatzgruppen* were created to combat those considered hostile to the Reich, including Jews, Communists, and others. Father Patrick Desbois, author of *Holocaust by Bullets*, (his story of discovering mass gravesites of Jews exterminated in the Ukraine) is shown interviewing people in the former USSR to gather information about the mass killings. The documentary is woven together with harrowing testimonials from survivors, witnesses and experts with rare video footage.

Following the documentary Bob Rich, American Red Cross Holocaust Tracing Services-Ventura Chapter, will talk about the tracing services which research the fate of loved ones missing since the Holocaust and its aftermath. The American Red Cross assists U.S. residents searching for information on themselves, family members, and friends regarding: proof of internment, forced/slave labor, or evacuation from Europe and the former Soviet territories. These tracing services are free and involve partner organizations worldwide.

The JGSCV is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques, and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history.

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim. There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV.

The Los Angeles Regional Family History Center has updated its estimated date to reopen. It now might be reopening sometime in July or August 2010. We will keep the JGSCV membership apprised of the official reopening when it is scheduled.

“Who Do You Think You Are”, the NBC prime time show depicting celebrities searching their family history, is attracting more viewers. The March 12 episode that followed NFL star Emmitt Smith’s efforts was seen by 13% more adults than the previous episode (Sarah Jessica Parker, right) according to Media Life Magazine. It also represents an increase of 50% over NBC’s previous offering on Friday night at 8PM an indication of the growing interest in genealogy. If you missed the latest episode where Lisa Kudrow traces her Jewish roots to eastern Europe and the Holocaust you may view it at <http://tinyurl.com/cfp55h> Don’t forget to watch the last three episodes: April 2, Brook Shields; April 9, Susan Sarandon; April 23, Spike Lee on NBC at 8PM pacific.



United States Census 2010

Everyone will have received their 2010 census form in the mail by the time you are reading this. Remember to fill out the form for everyone living in the household. This year’s census only has 10 questions, and will not ask some of the questions as in the past which we as genealogists have come to rely on for information. As the census will not be released to the public for 72 years, you may want to make a copy of your form so that your descendants will have this as a “snapshot” of your household on April 1, 2010.

Both the US Census Bureau and the National Archives have created blogs that may answer your questions regarding the census and its preservation. To access the blogs go to US Census Bureau:

<http://blogs.census.gov/2010census/> For information from the census bureau other than on the census go to:

<http://2010census.gov> National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

<http://blogs.archives.gov/online-public-access/>



TRAVELING LIBRARY BOOKS CLASSIFICATION A and C (plus Holocaust books from Cat. B) will be at the April 11 meeting. See www.jgscv.org under library traveling for the list of books in these categories.

BOOK REPORTS: If you are a 2010 dues-paid member, you may be able to borrow certain of our traveling library books (which is otherwise non-circulating) for the book report- a new benefit of membership. If you would like to participate in our new book review program please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@jgscv.org for more information. Non-members may also participate by reporting on their own or a public library genealogically-relevant book. All books selected for the book review need to be prior approved.

2010 JGSCV Meeting Dates

All Meetings are held at Temple Adat Elohim
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

April 11 Sun. 1:30-3:30 PM

Nat’l Geographic Channel documentary “Hitler’s Hidden Holocaust” and Bob Rich “Red Cross Holocaust Tracing Services”

May 2 Sun. 1:30-3:30 PM

“Genealogy in the Round: Share your Successes, Failures, Artifacts and Brick Walls”

June 6 Sun. 1:30-3:30 PM

Schelly Talalay Dardashti, “Current Trends and Recent Discoveries in Sephardi and Converso/Bnai Anousim Research

June 27 Sun. 1:30-4:15 PM

Daniel Horowitz, “Genealogical Resources in Latin America” and
“MyHeritage Research-Genealogy Super Search Engine”

August 1 Sun. 1:30-3:30 PM

“One Foot in America the Jewish Emigrants of the Red Star Line and Eugeen Van Mieghem (1875-1930)
Erwin Joos, Conservator & Curator, Eugeen Van Mieghem Museum, Antwerp, Belgium

Ancestry.com has 2 free webinars scheduled:

Tuesday, April 6, 5PM Pacific - *Getting Started on Ancestry.com* is designed to introduce new users to the website but can also be a refresher for the more experienced. **Wednesday, May 19, 5PM Pacific** – *Family Tree Maker 2010 Advanced Topics* will identify and explain how to navigate some of the more advanced features of Family Tree Maker 2010 for those ready for the next step.

All Ancestry.com webinars are free. However, Family Tree Maker 2010 software must be purchased for use and ancestry.com requires a subscription. You may register for the webinars at <http://tinyurl.com/d6vpsn>

Plan for the Riga Ghetto Museum*

By Judy Kasman



On February 2nd, 2010, the vice-mayor of Riga, Ainars Slesers, and Chairman of the Jewish Religious Community (Shamir), Rabbi Menachem Barkahan, signed a protocol of intentions on the foundation of the Riga Ghetto Museum.

The area of the Riga Ghetto is almost unique in Europe because it has not undergone any architectural changes over the last sixty years. More than 70,000 Latvian Jews were killed during the Holocaust; 20,000 Jews from Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary passed through the Riga Ghetto.

The Riga Ghetto Museum will be located in the historical part of the city, behind the Central Market, not far from the culture centre, Spikeri. The building will have a total area of more than 1,000 square metres and will boast a large courtyard which visitors will get to through the passenger wagon in which the Jews were brought to Riga from Western Europe.

Displayed in the rooms of the two-storey museum will be artifacts from the Ghetto. There will also be multimedia devices through which a visitor will get a full picture of the life and history of the Ghetto, and there will be access to various databases, i.e. children who were killed in the territory of Latvia, Jews who survived during the Holocaust and who lived in Latvia after the war, the Ghetto house registers and others.

On the second floor of the Museum, there will be seminar rooms, a library and a hall for cultural activities. Shamir will seek the support of private donors for funds to build this Museum. One of the main sources for material for the exhibits might be descendants of the Latvian Jews worldwide. George Lansmanis, an adviser of the vice-mayor of Riga, made the first contribution to the Riga Ghetto Museum exhibition by gifting his precious family relic, the album of his grandfather, who was hidden from the Nazis from the 1st July 1941 to October 1944 while Nazis lived on the second and third floors of the very same building. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/ygq7x2n>

*Reprinted from Toronto Shem Tov, March 2010

Military Morning Reports: Genealogical Hint Mentioned by Steve Luxenberg

One of the many genealogical hints Steve Luxenberg gave in his presentation on *Annie's Ghosts* was about the US Military "Morning Reports". While many of the US Army and Air Force records were destroyed in the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO, Steve informed us that he was able to find out about some of his father's military records by requesting Morning Reports that had multiple carbon copies, and were not destroyed in the fire. Morning Reports are daily reports on the comings and goings of all personnel. You would have to know the unit the person served and the dates of service. Steve said he will provide more information on how to obtain Military Reports for our next newsletter – but it was through an Army FOIA officer who sent a letter to St. Louis authorizing Steve to obtain the records. Stay tuned! For more information on military records see: <http://tinyurl.com/cxr5e>

Census Tech: When Punch Cards Reigned

With the latest U.S. census just getting under way, technology publisher cnet has prepared a tour of population-counting technology from days gone by. To take the tour visit <http://tinyurl.com/vh1vh6e>.

Germany Relaxes Access to Civil Registration Records

It was reported on the JewishGen German SIG Discussion Group that the German Standesamt (civil registration offices) has relaxed restrictions on access to post-1875 civil registration birth, marriage and death certificates. Earlier laws restricted information to spouses and direct-line ancestors. Now exempt from these restrictions are records of births through 1898, marriages through 1928 and deaths through 1978. Additional information indicated that access will increase by one year every year. That is, birth records available after 110 years, marriage after 80 years and deaths after 30 years. After these time periods, records will be transferred from the local civil registration office to the local archives. It was also reported that it is now possible to obtain extracts of genealogical information or uncertified photocopies of these documents.

The Museum of Family History has posted a video, *Deportation to the Death Camps* until April 4. According to Steve Lasky, at least three separate locales seem to be part of this first film, and one is supposedly a Galician village from during the war. You can also see during the last minute and a half of the film what appears to be the deportation of Jews from the Lodz Ghetto. Steve hopes that someone can confirm. "While watching the end of this film I felt that I was in the railroad car as people were boarding it. It's one thing to read about the deportations, or see still photos of it, or even see films about the Lodz ghetto, e.g. the film about Irena Sendler, but it is another thing to see the actual footage", says Steve. Anyone who once lived in these areas or is otherwise well familiar with the landmarks in these towns will be able to identify the town. If you or someone you know can do so, please contact Steve via museumoffamilyhistory.com. It is unlikely that you will recognize anyone in the film, but one never knows. The 8 ½ minute film is entitled "Deportations of Jews" (aka "Deportation to the Death Camps"), and was supposedly filmed by a Nazi cameraman. It can be viewed <http://tinyurl.com/vlzc8fw>



More than three generations of Americans have grown up reading the stories of an irrepressible little brown monkey known in this country as "Curious George." But few people know about the incredible journey made by his creators, Margret and H.A. Rey, to escape the Nazi invasion of Paris at the start of World War II. Stashing

a few precious belongings and manuscripts in their knapsacks and the baskets of their bicycles, the Jewish couple fled Paris in June 1940, starting a five month odyssey by bike, train, and boat that would eventually bring them to American shores.

The Wartime Escape explores the Rey's early creative collaborations and traces how the story of George himself (originally titled 'The Adventures of Fifi') spanned the wartime period. The Illinois Holocaust Museum exhibition features 27 framed art prints by artist Allan Drummond and supplemental archival images from the holdings of the DeGrummond Collection of Children's Literature at the University of Southern Mississippi. The exhibition is based in part on the 2005 publication, *The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey*, written by Louise Borden and illustrated by Allan Drummond (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York). The exhibition is organized and curated by Beth Seldin Dotan, Director of the Institute for Holocaust Education in Omaha, Nebraska.

JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jan Meisels Allen, President	president@jgscv.org	Stewart Bernstein, Member-at-large	stewart@jgscv.org
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	Helene Rosen, VP Membership		membership@jgscv.org

David Oseas, Webmaster: webmaster@jgscv.org Raya Sagi, Librarian: librarian@jgscv.org
Mailing address: 6052 Hackers Lane, Agoura Hills, CA 91301 Phone: 818-889-6616
Website: www.jgscv.org