

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST



JGSCV

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

November, 2013

Volume 9 Issue 2

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

There were 60 members and guests who attended JGSCV's October 6th meeting celebrating JGSCV's 8th anniversary. Our guest speaker was Warren Blatt, JGSCV's board and founding member, managing director and editor-in-chief of JewishGen.org. JGSCV was also celebrating International Jewish Genealogy Month—the month of Cheshvan October 5-November 3rd.

JGSCV would not be celebrating our 8th year if not for Temple Adat Elohim. We are extremely fortunate for the wonderful, warm reception we have enjoyed by the Temple since the fall of 2005 when they agreed to host our meetings. Thank you Temple Adat Elohim!

Warren's presentation, *Jewish Given Names* explained why "Mordechai Yehuda" is also "Mortka Leib" is also "Max". The presentation was an introduction to Jewish given names (first names), focusing on practical issues for genealogical research. Our ancestors each had many different given names and nicknames, in various languages and alphabets --this can make Jewish genealogical research difficult. Warren's handout is on the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org under prior meetings with the meeting date. Also on our website is the link to Warren's presentation that is on JewishGen <http://www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/GivenNames/>. To read more about the program go to page 6.

Debra Kay Blatt facilitated our schmoozing corner which is available 20 minutes before



Warren Blatt presenting "Jewish Given Names" at the October 6th meeting

NEXT MEETING

MONDAY, November, 4th 7-9 PM

One-Step Webpages

Perennial favorite Steve Morse will present his updated potpourri of web tools and a special case study of success.

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each meeting to assist you with your genealogical questions.

JGSCV member Judy Karta gave our 5-minute genealogical hint: *How to Create a Family Cookbook as a Record of Family History*. Family recipes with accompanying stories about the person are a great way to remember family members and bring back fond memories of those who made the recipe.

While this is the November issue of *Venturing Into Our Past*, it will be received during the month of October. While our October meeting already celebrated International Genealogy Month, you can still do something to help celebrate! October is also Family History Month—what have you done with your genealogy to celebrate one or more of these functions? Have you written a memory, identified people in an old family photograph, looked at old newspapers at the library or on the Internet for articles about your ancestral town or family? Have you reviewed your research with a fresh eye to break down some brick walls?

Today's world of electronic communication has made it possible for JGSCV to retain Allan Linderman on the board—when he and Carole become “snowbirds” by going to Florida for four-five months a year. Electronically, Allan can participate in our board meetings while watching the Ocean from his balcony for the 4-5 months he is Florida. Allan along with Marion Werle will be co-editors of *Venturing Into Our Past*. We are also delighted that JGSCV librarian, Israel “Issie” Perel has indicated his willingness to serve on the board. See page 10 for more about the six candidates for the JGSCV board. Elections will be held at our December 15th meeting.

JGSCV is only as strong as its members—the more people who participate the stronger the society. We just celebrated our 8th anniversary and we plan to be around for many more years – with YOUR participation. Just 1-2 volunteer hours a month will strengthen the society. Every member will get more out of the society by becoming active. There are several short-term projects for individual members to benefit the society. Members will be contacted within the next few months with some suggested activities. If you have ideas for projects that will help JGSCV members, let us know!

JGSCV's annual membership drive has started! If you join or renew between now and our December 15 meeting – and attend that meeting - you are eligible for one of many great genealogical prizes. The grand prize is a one year worldwide subscription to Ancestry.com. Other prizes include subscriptions to Legacy Family Tree, Roots Magic, Family Tree Maker, Newspapers.com, Fold 3 and more! See page 17 for a membership form.

Our next meeting is on a Monday night—November 4th from 7:00-9:00 pm. Monday night meetings allow those unable to attend Sunday afternoon the opportunity to benefit from JGSCV offerings. The incomparable Steve Morse will present *One-Step Webpages: A Potpourri of Genealogical Search Tools* (abbreviated) and *Case Study* (new lecture) using the One-Step Webpages as well as other websites to develop a family history.

Looking forward to seeing you on November 4th!

Jan Meisels Allen



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

2014 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send a check in the appropriate amount to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountainwood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain the new/renewal membership form on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

FACEBOOK FOR GENEALOGY

Facebook, the social networking site has compiled a list of '50 Genealogy Resources' available on their site. Facebook claims to have well over 1000 pages related to genealogy and ancestry research to help track down family histories. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/lmwkp66> and see which will help you.

"JEWISH REFUGEES IN SHANGHAI" EXHIBIT

An exhibition at Hillel of UCLA for the first time highlights the role China played in helping save over 20,000 Jewish men, women and children from 1933 to 1941. There are fascinating photos and artifacts from Shanghai's Jewish Refugee Museum as well as two panels. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/m8e9t7v>

OPENING DELAYED FOR WARSAW'S MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS

The long anticipated museum in Warsaw is over budget and seeking additional governmental funds to complete its project. The opening of the core exhibition is now expected to be the

fall of 2014. For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/kjtrk4y>

ANCESTRY.COM EXPANDS DNA TESTING

Ancestry can now map the ethnic origins of individual DNA to 26 global regions including more detailed European ethnicity. Ancestry.com's DNA database now includes more than 200,000 samples. For more information go to www.ancestrydna.com

FAMILYSEARCH ADDS 2 MILLION+ RECORDS

FamilySearch has added more than 2 million indexed records and images from Canada, England and Russia. Searchable records can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/44h6mw2>

MOCAVO TO BE 'FREE FOREVER'

Genealogy search engine Mocavo has been a two tiered site with lots of free access but with a paid version offering more data. The two tiers will remain but the free version will offer more access than in the past. Dick Eastman includes an explanation of these changes: <http://tinyurl.com/jwxxye2>

**JGSCV Welcomes New Member
FRAN BERMAN**

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 4, 2013** at Temple Adat Elohim 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, **7:00-9:00 p.m.**

Note different day of week and later start time

The Topic: One-Step Webpages: A Potpourri of Genealogical Search Tools and a Case Study Using One-Step Webpages



The One-Step website started out as an aid for finding passengers in the Ellis Island database. Afterward it was expanded to help with searching in the 1930 US census and now the 1940 US census. Over the years, it has continued to evolve and today includes about 200 web-based tools divided into 16 separate categories ranging from genealogical searches to astronomical calculations to last-minute bidding on e-bay. This presentation will describe the range of tools available and give the

highlights of each one. Steve will also present a *Case Study: Genealogy of Renee Kaufman* using the One-Step Webpages as well as other websites to develop a family history. It illustrates how, with a minimal amount of initial information, an entire genealogy can be obtained. The presentation also shows how to obtain records in spite of name misspellings, and how to avoid accepting wrong information.

Speaker: Stephen Morse is the creator of the One-Step Website for which he has received both the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Outstanding Contribution Award from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, Award of Merit from the National Genealogical Society and first-ever Excellence Award from the Association of Professional Genealogists. Steve's one-step program has revolutionized how to do genealogical searches in large databases! He is best known as the architect of the Intel 8086 (the granddaddy of today's Pentium processor), which sparked the PC revolution 30 years ago.

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 2014!

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JGSCV UPDATES . . .

JGSCV's permanent library is now housed at the Agoura Hills Library (29901 Ladyface Circle, 91301). The Library is open every day except Sunday and Monday. For more information call 818-889-2278. A complete list of the permanent library and the traveling library books which are available at each meeting is on our website <http://www.jgscv.org>.

THE SCHMOOZING CORNER is open 20 minutes before all meetings. Come to the front right corner of the meeting room and look for a sign like the one on the left where a knowledgeable JGSCV member will be available to help with insights your genealogical questions. JGSCV board member Debra Kay-Blatt (top right) is helping at the last meeting.

specific to member Debra



Get ready for anticipating ancestry.com,

the December 15th JGSCV meeting. Besides Crista Cowan's always excellent insights about it is our membership renewal and Chanukah Celebration. There are many excellent genealogical door prizes for members who will be randomly chosen. And, the grand prize is a worldwide subscription to ancestry.com. Prizes are only available to dues paid members.

The *Letters Home* story beginning on page 11 was written by a Jill Blume of the Toronto JGS. Their newsletter, *Shem Tov* regularly publishes a member's story in a column titled *On A Personal Note*. "Venturing Into Our Past" would also like to publish genealogical stories of our members. We welcome your stories and offer our help to bring them to the written page. Please contact Allan Linderman, editor of "Venturing Into Our Past" (newslettereditor@jgscv.org) with ideas or thoughts. Allan will help organize your thoughts to get started or write your story for you.

You can help JGSCV when you shop at Amazon.com by simply entering 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 will take you to the same page you always start at – except JGSCV will receive a marketing fee at no cost to you.

Don't forget to sign-up or renew your Ralph's Community Contribution Program. JGSCV receives significant contributions from Ralph's when you use your Ralph's Card and have chosen JGSCV as your participant organization. See "Notices" at the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org.



If you enjoy and are enriched by JGSCV programs, please remember to renew your membership or join for the first time. JGSCV dues help defray the costs required to develop such a full schedule of fertile programs and speakers to enhance your genealogical research and experience. A form is on page 15 or on the website www.jgscv.org

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Highlights From:

Jewish Given Names

By Jan Meisels Allen

Did you ever wonder about the derivation of your given name? The JGSCV October program answered many of these questions. Warren Blatt, JGSCV board and founding member and Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of JewishGen.org, an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, gave an erudite and interesting presentation on the history and patterns of Jewish first names, and how to recognize your ancestors' names in genealogical sources.

Warren used his family names as examples—the religious vs. secular names i.e. Hebrew, Yiddish Polish, and Anglicized versions. He showed examples of marriage registrations, tombstone inscriptions –which have the Hebrew with the father's name and the Anglicized name i.e. Mordechai Yehudah ben reb Tzvi= Mordechai Yehudah, son of Tzvi and Max Goldman. He also explained the religious name—the Shem HaKodesh-- vs. the secular or kinnui; the Hebrew name vs. synagogue use of a name vs. the everyday and the Hebrew language vs. the vernacular language name.

Jews follow naming traditions whether Ashkenazi or Sephardic-albeit they are different traditions. Ashkenazic names after someone who is deceased. Sephardic names after someone who is living.

Ashkenazi naming patterns tradition follows:

- 1-father-mother
2. grandparent
3. great grandparent
4. uncle/aunt

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Sephardic naming tradition follows:

1. firstborn son named after the paternal grandfather
2. second male child after the maternal grandfather
3. first daughter named after the paternal grandmother
4. second female child after the maternal grandmother
5. next child after the paternal uncle or aunt, etc.

Given names may be for:

- “Time”, such as Pesach for Passover, Ester, Mordechai for Purim etc.
- Amuletic [names for good luck], such as Alter/Alta; Chaim/Chaya

Double names may be unrelated or related. This can have a biblical association, a diminutive, historical association and other types of relationships. Examples of double names are: Abram Moshe or Moshe Abram; a biblical association Benjamin-Wolf, Yehudah-Leib; Menachem –Mendel or Eliezer-Lipman.

Examples of calques (a loan translation—borrowed from another language) Hebrew to Yiddish that was cited included: Arya to Leib; Zev to Wolf; Dov to Ber, Tzipa to Feiga. Some given names have multiple relationships:

| <u>Shem HaKodesh</u> | <u>Biblical Association</u> | <u>Yiddish Calque</u> | <u>Sym bol</u> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Yehudah | Areyah | Leib | Lion |
| Beniamin | Ze'ev | Vulf | Wolf |

Warren also discussed variants—the Yiddish language merged with Hebrew—Avraham to: Avram Yaakov to Yankel

Nicknames or diminutives: Robert to Rob to Bob to Bobby

Yiddish given names also have diminutives such as Wolf to Velvl; Ber to Berel or Berko for males and Szejna to Szejndl or Chana to Chendl for females.

Warren discussed double diminutives for the formation of Yiddish nicknames such as Efraim to Froim to Froiml and Shmuel to Zemuel to Zanuel to Zanvel.

When looking at the “native” name, some languages do not pronounce or even have some of the letters we are familiar with in English. For example Russian does not have an “h” so the name Hersh would be Gersh. In Polish the Slavic sound “v”: is a “w”.

There is no exact translation one name for another into English. An example of almost 100 diminutives was shown for Miriam.

Name meanings may have their derivation from animals, the bible, colors: examples include: Animals: Leib, Wolf, Devorah; Biblical: Avraham, Sarah; Colors: Breina , Roza or personal qualities: Sheina, Malka .

Several source references were given- many of which are in the JGSCV libraries: These included: Alexander Beider’s *A Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names: Their Original, Structure, Pronunciation and Migration*; Boris Feldblyum’s *Russian-Jewish Given Names, Rabbi Shmuel Gorr’s Jewish Personal Names: Their Original, Derivation and Diminutive Forms* and Jerry Esterson’s *Given Name*

Patronymics-identification of a father’s given name was discussed- examples in Hungarian- the ending would be -vics while in Polish it would be -owicz or -ówna for females. When working with foreign languages one needs to be mindful of their grammar and declensions- an example from a Polish record given was: Joskiem Wulfem to Josek Wulf. Other examples included how to convert genitive to nominative cases.

Reading records may be challenging due to the handwriting of the clerk who recorded the birth, marriage, death or census records. The handwriting may lead to misreading certain letters which frustrate our interpretation of the records. “Correct” spelling of names is a 20th century phenomenon...it really doesn’t matter! Chaim, Haim, Khaim, Hayyim, Chayim are all the same name. Another issue in translating names are

commonly interchanged consonants with phonetic similarities such as a “P,” “B” or “T”, “D”.—i.e. Mordka or Mortka.



In the US we have experienced an Americanization of a given name. An example was:

- Ryfka-Yiddish
- Rivkah – Hebrew
- Rebecca-Anglicization
- Becky-English Nickname

Different languages have different name equivalents –albeit all from the same root:

- German: Josef
- English: Joseph
- Spanish: Jose

Italian: Giuseppe
Lithuanian: Juozas

Warren shared an analysis of tombstone data
Hebrew to English Adaptions

Aharon 48% Aaron; 20% Harry, 8% Arthur
and 20% other names

Avraham 77% were Abe/Abraham, 3%
Arthur, 2% Albert and 15% other names

Basha/Batya 83% Bessie, 7% Bertha 10%
other names

Chana 82% Anna/Annie many other names
Jennie, Henrietta, and Emma etc.

In comparing English to Hebrew from
tombstones:

Aaron/Aron were 92% Aharon and 8% Arya
Anna/Annie 81% Chana, 5% Chaya 4% Hinda
etc.

Examples were also given of Yiddish to
Spanish and Yiddish to Soviet adaptations to
show how names are transformed from the
bible into different languages. Warren also
showed name distributions from Lomza in
Lomza Gubernia, and Chęciny in Kielce
Gubernia Poland in the 1800's. It was
interesting to note the 10 most popular
names were the same for both –just within
the 10 there was a variation of which came
first-and fairly similar with the most popular
names in Israel in 1991. Showing how

popularity of names is cyclical Warren also
demonstrated popular names in the US in the
population in 1910s, 1930s, 1950s, and
1970s.

In summary, genealogical and religious
records illustrate there are many names for
one person: the Shem HaKodesh, a birth
registration, passenger list, US name and
naturalized list. The passenger list was
written by the ship's clerk at the port who
heard the name through his own native
language resulting in different spellings than
the immigrant might have done.

A quote given during Warren's presentation
is an excellent summation:

“With our despised immigrant clothing we
shed also our impossible Hebrew names. A
Committee of our friends, several years
ahead of us in American experience put their
heads together and concocted American
names for us all. Those of our real names that
had no pleasing American equivalents they
ruthlessly discarded, content if they retained
the initials”.

Mary Austin, *The Promised Land* (1912) pp.
187-188.

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH GENEALOGY MONTH

The International Jewish Genealogy Month honors our Jewish ancestors through the pursuit of Jewish family history research. IAJGS sponsors and supports IJGM and recognizes the celebration with a poster to promote IJGM. It is the hope of IAJGS that member organizations like JGSCV will take advantage of the International Jewish Genealogy Month to promote Jewish genealogy and publicize the organization and its activities all over the world. The International Jewish Genealogy Month is celebrated during the Hebrew month of Cheshvan. For 2013 the dates are October 5- November 3.



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Jan Meisels Allen Recognized

Following the opening remarks by JGSCV president Jan Meisels Allen at the October 6th meeting, there was a surprise speaker. Before Jan could introduce the program, JGSCV founding board member Werner Frank asked for the microphone. On the occasion of JGSCV's 8th anniversary, Werner spoke for all JGSCV members as he recognized Jan's hard work and accomplishments on behalf of all Jewish genealogists but especially JGSCV members. Following is the transcript of Werner's remarks representative of the entire genealogical community.

***"Dynamo, prolific contributor, savvy genealogist,
Leader, imaginative go-getter, livewire, achiever***

Those are the attributes that describe our leader, Jan Meisels Allen.

***Early contributor to the growth of JGSLA . . . on its board of directors for five years
Founder of JGSCV and dynamic president for eight years
Vice president of our umbrella organization, the IAJGS . . . International Association of
Jewish Genealogy Societies***

***Head of its Public Records Access Monitoring
Committee (PRAMC)***

***Alert to everything that is going on worldwide in the
area of public records***

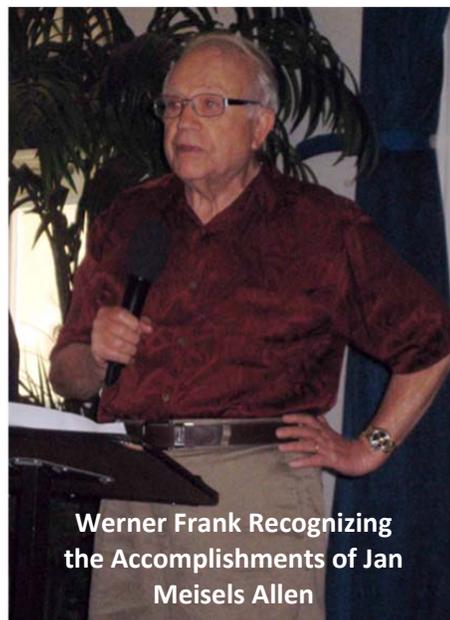
***Recently awarded the President's Citation by the
National Genealogical Society (May 2013) for
'vigilance in support of records preservation and in
defense of public access to public records'***

***She is also a devoted worker on behalf of the Agoura
(Hills) Library***

***But behind every successful woman, there is a man . .
. . how else could she lug all those books to our
meetings? So kudos to husband Tom Allen as well . .***

***By the way if you wish to know more about Jan, just
Google (her) . . . and within .38 seconds, you will be
offered 9,750,000 citations.***

***Join me in giving honor to Jan . . . we have an appropriate affirmation in saying
Kol hakavod. Well done, Jan."***



Werner Frank Recognizing
the Accomplishments of Jan
Meisels Allen

Well done, indeed. And, a hearty thank you from all JGSCV members, past, present and future.

Forthcoming JGSCV Elections

As per the JGSCV Bylaws a duly appointed Nominating Committee, chaired by Hal Bookbinder (with board member Helene Rosen and general member Susan Birdsall) has recommended the following slate of individuals to fill the six individuals for election to two-year positions on the JGSCV board effective January 2014. The terms of five of the nine existing board members are expiring at the end of this year. As permitted by the Society's bylaws, the board has authorized an increase in the Board to ten directors.

The six candidates are:

Jan Meisels Allen
Stewart Bernstein
Warren Blatt
Dorothy Drilich
Allan Linderman
Israel Perel

Five of the six nominees, currently serve on the board: Jan Meisels Allen, Stewart Bernstein, Warren Blatt, Dorothy Drilich and Allan Linderman. Israel Perel serves as the current JGSCV librarian.

According to the Bylaws, anyone else wishing to be nominated to the Board can do so during the November 4, 2013 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 15, 2013 meeting.

JGSCV MEMBER BENEFITS

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

Letters Home

By Jill Blume, Member JGS Toronto

(Reprinted with permission from Shem Tov, September, 2013, and the author)

Editor's note: This appeared in a column titled, "On A Personal Note" which *Shem Tov* reserves for members to tell a personal story.

In February, 1945, my uncle George Halpern wrote a letter to his father in Ottawa. The letter begins: "A few hours ago I returned to my base in Glasgow from nine days' leave in London. I have great news of especial interest to you." He had located my grandfather's family in wartime London.

My two uncles, George and Abe Halpern, were in the Canadian navy during World War II. Before they headed overseas, my grandfather, Reuven Meyer Halpern, gave each of them a list of family members living in London. Upon finding a relative on the list, my uncles were told to say, "I am the son of Meyer Halpern from Warsaw who lived in Aunt's house on Commercial Street in 1909."

There were no details of who this "aunt" was. Was she a sister of his father or mother or even an aunt through marriage? He instructed my uncles to find the families of Israel and Beila Metz and Avram and Rachel Brilliantstone.

Who are the Metzses and Brilliantstones who sheltered my grandfather, a 26-year-old revolutionary, in 1909?

My grandfather was captured and sent to Siberia after the failed Russian uprising of 1905. He escaped by sleigh and found his way to Finland. From there, he went to England, joined a British shipping company, and went to Africa.

Why would a Polish Jew from Warsaw, fluent in several European languages, go to England?

This letter explained: he had close family, an aunt in London who could help him. His request to his sons to find the Metzses and Brilliantstones was evidence of his fondness and concern for them.



He provided my uncles with no addresses, assuming correctly that between 1909 and 1941, the families had moved on from the Jewish immigrant neighbourhoods of East London. Once in London, my uncle simply looked in the phone book. Uncle George's letter describes meeting Hilda, Mitzy, Becky, and Kitty Metz, by then middle-aged with children. They remember meeting my grandfather in 1909 when they were young women. My uncle wrote: "Becky was so excited and delighted to find her name on the list. 'He remembered me all these years! He remembered 'Becky'....!' She evidently thought a great deal of you. She told me how for years afterwards, her mother, Beila Metz, would always say: 'Myer said... (this) and Myer said (that)...' Becky says you were so clever, so brilliantly clever...and, even as a child, Becky admired clever men."

In his letter, my uncle also reports, "your first cousin Leah is dead. Your Aunt Mulkie is dead. Keila is dead," and A. Brilliantstone was very sick, in hospital with no hope for recovery; however his wife Rachel was well.

By the time I found this letter, Uncle George was dead. I asked Uncle Abe how we were connected to the Metzses or the Brilliantstones, as he had also searched for them on a different occasion, but at

age 85, he could not remember. No other living relative had ever heard of them.

Enter Catherine Youngren, President of the Jewish Genealogical Institute of British Columbia. Catherine and I had connected through the workshops I hold in Vancouver on writing Jewish family stories. I told her about the mysterious family members in England, and Catherine responded, "I am always up for a genealogical challenge – please send me a copy of the letter."

Catherine's own particular research is focused on the UK, and especially East End Jewish London, so if anyone could discover the family connection from Uncle George's letter, it would be her.

First, she carefully reviewed the letter, and did some initial diagrams that started to illustrate the connections between the individuals mentioned in the letter. Then she concentrated on the surnames, METZ and BRILLIANTSTONE. Beginning with BRILLIANTSTONE, the most unique of the two surnames, she checked the 1911 UK Census on the "findmypast.uk" website, and immediately found Abraham and Rachel and three of their children still living at home. The census page also noted that Rachel and Abraham had a total of 9 children, but only 3 had survived into adulthood.

Checking both the 1891 and the 1901 UK Censuses, Catherine found no mention of the family and assumed that they probably arrived in the UK after 1901.

Then she did the same search for the METZ family. An "Israel and Bella Metz" first appear in the 1891 UK census. The 1911 (UK) Census shows that the Metz parents had had 13 children of whom 10 were still alive.

Referring back to Uncle George's letter, and to the information she had gathered from the censuses, Catherine used "findmypast.uk" to find the births, marriages and deaths of the persons enumerated and noted. With marriage registrations, she was often able to move forward a generation or two hoping to discover living family members that I might be able to contact.

As with all genealogical research there were challenges. Catherine couldn't always be sure she had found the right people. Some family members used their middle name rather than their first. In the case of the Brilliantstones, over time, some of the family elected to shorten the surname to "Brilliant" while others took "Stone."

Catherine crosschecked the information she was collecting by using "ancestry.com" to check city directories, voters' lists, marriage indexes, and passenger lists. She used the archival website for the London "Jewish Chronicle" to check for birth, engagement and marriage, and death announcements. She used the websites for the *London Gazette* and The British Newspaper Archives, looking for articles about family members.

On one occasion Catherine simply Googled the surname "Brilliantstone," and discovered an article written at the end of the nineteenth century entitled, "Odd Corners on London; Diamonds in the Ghetto," by Brian Bellasis. He writes about the six jewelry shops in Black Lion Court, and their "blaze of stones." He comments that other shops and businesses in the Court are rather dingy, but, "only the milliner's and the corset establishment of Mrs. Rachel Brilliantstone make any attempt to vie with the jewelers in matters of appearance."

Hatmaking work continued in the family as Uncle George wrote:

I called at Hilda Metz's neat hat shop on Grosvenor St. off Bond, (not far from Picadilly)... I was very much impressed with some of the beautiful women's hats she produced with her own hands whilst carrying on an intelligent and interesting conversation with me during the course of two or three hours.

There is no question that the Metzses and the Brilliantstones are related. Perhaps Hilda Metz began her millinery career in Rachel's hat store.

Late into her research, Catherine went back to ancestry.com, and searched "Brilliantstone" once more, this time checking the "family trees" section

of the site. There were only two trees, both authored by a contact shown as "JAAlter." While searching the findmypast.uk, Catherine had found out that a granddaughter of Abraham Brilliantstone was named Judith Alterman. So Catherine decided to email "JAAlter," and ultimately we got in touch with each other directly.

But we still had no definite understanding of how we were connected.

Judith wrote me that she had once heard from her cousin Suzanne that her mother's mother came from "Haupens" – Data Point #1.

However Rachel Brilliantstone, Judith's grandmother, had the birth name of Klausner.

Then I found another war letter, an earlier one. It was written by my grandfather to my uncle Abe on April 7, 1944, and asks him to locate A. Brilliantstone, 34 Upper Tooting Park, London, SW 17.

My grandfather wrote, "His wife Rachel is my aunt Malke's daughter. Tell them that you are the son of Majer Halpern from Warsaw. Shloime's son."

Data Point #2: My grandfather wants the relatives to know that Abe is from Majer - *Shloime's son*. This strongly implies that the connection is through the Halpern branch. Shloime was the name of my great-grandfather referred to in one biography as the "Gaon and Tzadik, Reb Shlomo Halevi Halperin."

I speculate that Shlomo Halpern had a sister Malka, making Malka a "Haupen" or Halpern and my grandfather's "Aunt Mulkie." Malka married a Klausner and had a daughter, Rachel Klausner, who married Avram Brilliantstone and immigrated to England. Perhaps they brought her mother Malka with them. Perhaps that is what my grandfather meant when he wrote that he "lived in Aunt's house" – or maybe the aunt was on the Metz side. In any event, the mystery began to be solved with the discovery of Judith.

I can speculate endlessly of course. It seems from Uncle George's letter that in 1909, Meir fraternized quite warmly and closely with the Metz sisters. Was their mother Beila Metz, or her mother, another sister of my great-great grandfather, Shlomo Halpern? I will have to find more letters and the Metzses to solve that mystery.

Sharing great-great-great grandparents with Judith Alterman may seem to be a pretty trivial connection, but I see it this way: Both my grandfather and Judith's grandmother found their way out of the poverty and pogroms of Poland. They were able to leave before the destruction of European Jewry. They survived. Many of the family did not. We are connected through the help given to my grandfather in the early decades of the last century, and we are connected through the letters written 68 years ago.

My grandfather visited his aunt, Judith's great-grandmother, in 1909. Now it's up to me to visit Judith and solve more mysteries.

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JGSCV and RALPHS

JGSCV's partnership with Ralphs is an important part of our revenue. Your Board relies on fees received from **Ralphs Community Contribution Program** to help defray the cost of many of our programs, speakers, books and more. The Community Contribution program makes a contribution to JGSCV each time you shop at any of the Ralphs stores with no cost to you. It is the least expensive and easiest way to generate additional funds for your JGSCV. Everyone, even people you know who are not JGSCV members, can help by signing up for this program.



First, join Ralphs' Club. September 1st each year you must re-join (even if you are already a member) Besides helping JGSCV, Ralphs Club members also receive special discounts on featured purchases.

If you are already a registered participant, you will remain active only until August 31, 2013 at which time you will have to re-register. You can re-register for the new term at www.Ralphs.com starting **September 1, 2013**. Even if you registered as recently as July you will be required to register again starting September 1st!

Remember: You can renew or register for the first time at the JGSCV's meetings—but you must first have a Ralph's Card. You can easily obtain a card by going to the customer service desk at a Ralphs store near you. For more information contact Karen Lewy at Karen@jgscv.org.



Once you have a Ralphs Club card, register for the November, 2013

Community Contribution Program as follows:

Go to www.Ralphs.com and click on register/sign-in. This will register your Ralphs card so you will be entitled to discounts on featured items throughout each store. Include your email and create a password.

After you have registered your Ralph's Rewards Card you can sign-up for the Community Contribution Program and help JGSCV by following these steps:

1. **Sign-in with your email address and the password you created**
2. **Click on "Community" across the top of the page after it welcomes you with your name. Or, scroll down to bottom of page to click on "Community"**
3. **Click on Community Contribution (left hand side under "Community")**
4. **Click under participant where it says enroll**
5. **For participant questions click where it says "click here" above "enroll"**
6. **Click on enroll**
7. **Type in the first words of our organization i.e. "Jewish Gen" (if you only type in "Jewish" a number of organizations appear including ours, so by typing in the first few letters of our second name only we appear) and click on "search" and our name will pop up: "Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley &". Or key in our 5 digit NPO number 84732 and click 'Search'. Make certain it is our Society**

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

as there are other Jewish Genealogy Societies registered!

8. In the 'Select Your Organization Section', click on the bubble next to our name
9. Click on 'Save Changes'. Our name (Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley &.) will appear on the right side of this page. You have now completed your Online rewards card registration AND your Community Contributions registration.
10. Click on 'Logout' at the top of the page

The Ralphs Community Contribution program will pay JGSCV quarterly for monthly qualifying purchases per household:

Up to \$200 –1%;

Between \$200-\$349.99 -2%

Between \$350-\$500 3%; and

Over \$500 4%

JGSCV has been receiving from Ralphs over \$45=\$70 per quarter, or equal to 2-3 JGSCV memberships per quarter!

Remember even if you are only an occasional Ralphs shopper, your purchases help JGSCV!

Kristallnacht: Night of Broken Glass 75th Anniversary November 9-10

This year marks the 75th 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.

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, the closest one to our area is being sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Santa Barbara, Bronfman Family Jewish Community Center, located at 524 Chapala Street, SB, 93101 on November 7 at 5:00-7:00 pm. All are welcome and it's free of charge. More information is available at: <http://www.jewishsantabarbara.org/Kristallnacht2013.aspx>



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

JGSCV Meeting Dates Through June, 2014* at

Temple Adat Elohim
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Monday, November 4th 7:00-9:00 PM "One Step Webpages +" and a new Case Study using the One Step Webpages
Steve Morse will explain how one-step webpages (and others) can be used to develop entire family histories.

Sunday, December 15th 1:30-3:30 PM "Smarter Searching on Ancestry.com" And JGSCV's Chanukah Celebration

Crista Cowan of ancestry.com will return with more insights and tricks to more easily navigate the site.

Sunday, January 5, 2014 1:30-3:30 PM "For the Sake of the Children: The Letters Between Otto Frank and Nathan Straus, Jr." Joan Adler, Executive Director, Straus Historical Society reveals Otto Frank's letters to his friend in his desperate attempts flee Holland more than a year before his family was forced to hide.

Sunday, February 9th 1:00-5:00 PM "Assisted Research Day"

At LA Family History Center. Only current members. May join at the door.

Sunday, March 2nd 1:30-3:30 PM Program "German Jewish Genealogy Pre World War I"

Roger Lustig, research coordinator for GerSIG and researcher and genealogist specializing in the history of German Jewry

Monday, April 7th 7:00-9:00 PM "The Sephardic Community in Los Angeles"

Arthur Benveniste discusses growing up in the LA Sephardic community.

Sunday, May 4th 1:30-3:30 PM "Yom Hashoah" (Holocaust Memorial)

Sunday, June 1st 1:30-3:30 PM Program TBD

*All programs subject to change. Check website www.jgscv.org



2014 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

Dues paid now are good through December 2014

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.)
