

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



JGSCV

October 2020

Volume 16 Issue 1

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We hope you are doing well and are safe. As we continue to safe distance and wear masks we have more time at home to do our genealogy.

JGSCV had an excellent program on September 13 with Karen Franklin talking on *Rescue and Resettlement: Researching Refugees from Nazi Germany*. Whether or not you are researching German ancestry, the techniques employed to obtain the records were examples of how to research, collaborate with colleagues and how to get around “brick walls” where one thinks there are no records. To read the highlights of Karen’s program see page 5.

Thank you to Hal Bookbinder for facilitating the “Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner” before the beginning of the meeting. During the Ask the Experts session, Hal shared information on the Los Angeles Public Library (City not County). Using their library card permits you to remotely access a variety of sources from their genealogy section. You may also remotely access the Library edition of Ancestry, JewishData.com (images of Jewish tombstones), a variety of newspapers, city directories and more. If you don’t have a library card you can apply remotely at: <https://www.lapl.org/about-lapl/contact-us/e-card/e-card-registration>. Other local libraries with subscriptions to genealogical websites can be accessed at Thousand Oaks Library, Camarillo Library, and others. A list of local libraries and Family History Centers are available on JGSCV’s website under [resources https://www.jgscv.org/resources.html](https://www.jgscv.org/resources.html). ProQuest with approval of Ancestry has extended the remote access to libraries that have that resource through December 31. This is a great way to spend your free home time doing some genealogy research.



JGSCV’s October Zoom speaker

NEXT MEETING

Sunday Oct. 4th 1:30-3:30 PM

Members only ZOOM!

Think Like a Reporter to Avoid
Genealogy Mistakes



Jennifer Mendelsohn, a seasoned journalist will explain how genealogists can use reporters’ techniques to focus on only the most reliable information.

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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.

Our series for commemorating the 75th anniversary World War II continues with Debby Wenkart's story about her grandfather, Isak Wenkart. See page 12. Our family story is by JGSCV treasurer, Karen Lewy on Charles Skurnik, her maternal grandfather. See page 17. The family stories started as a result of our June speaker, Joan Adler, and we really appreciate your submitting brief vignettes/memories about someone in your family.

We would love to share your World War II and family stories for November and December. Please send them to Allan at newslettereditor@jgscv.org and me at president@jgsv.org. If you need assistance, Allan is eager to help you.

We have secured dates for 2021 Zoom meetings. See page 18. I have postponed the annual exclusive research afternoon at the LA Family History Library scheduled for February 14. We hope to reschedule for late 2021 or 2022.

JGSCV is a participant in Ralph's and Food for Less Community Awards. We have been advised that you need not reregister this year. If you are already registered and have JGSCV as your charity of choice, there is nothing more to do. If you are not yet registered please go to our website to learn how to participate: <https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/Ralphs%20Community%20Contribution%20Program.pdf>.

October starts our 2021 membership renewal and new members drive. The form is on the website at: <https://www.jgscv.org/membership.html>. Like in past year's our December 6 meeting we will have prizes donated by many different genealogical organizations. Those who join/renew for 2021 by **December 4** will have their names placed in a bowl and are eligible to have their names drawn. Checks may be mailed to the address on the form or dropped off at my home by appointment. Cash will only be accepted at my home by appointment. Prizes so far: Ancestry Worldwide Subscription, Fold3. Com, newspapers.com, Ancestry DNA test, 3 MyHeritage subscriptions, 2 FT Maker Subscriptions, FT DNA, Legacy Software, Legacy webinars—that's 12 prizes and more may be coming.

Remember, if you are eligible you received an email from Marion Werle about submitting an application for the board. This must be completed and sent to Marion by October 2 for the committee's consideration: https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/board_application_form.pdf

Hal Bookbinder continues with his series on Practicing Safe Computing on page 11. This month's subject is "We are holding a package for you".

Our October 4 Zoom meeting is with our speaker Jennifer Mendelsohn, on "Think Like a Reporter to Avoid Genealogy Mistakes." See meeting notice on page 4 for more information.

Stay safe and healthy. On behalf of the JGSCV Board have a happy and healthy New Year. L'Shana Tova!

Jan Meisels Allen



Survey Reveals Deficiency In Basics With Younger American Adults on Holocaust Awareness and Knowledge

Gideon Taylor, President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), announced on September 16, 2020, the release of the *U.S.*

Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey, the first-ever 50-state survey on Holocaust knowledge among Millennials and Gen Z. Lack of basic Holocaust knowledge was lacking in Gen X and Millennial age groups. Mr. Taylor cited concern that since the last of any survivors from the Shoah are closing in on zero, there is still much to do and continued on: “The results are both shocking and saddening and they underscore why we must act now while Holocaust survivors are still with us to voice their stories. We need to understand why we aren’t doing better in educating a younger generation about the Holocaust and the lessons of the past.” California was not cited in either the worst or best states from the survey’s results.

For details, go to: <http://www.claimscon.org/millennial-study/>

Italian Jewish Family Trees

Following his retirement in the 1970s, Meir Padoa, an Italian Jew who made Aliyah and helped to found Kibbutz Givat Brenner, started collecting photographs and postcards of buildings in Italy that once belonged to Jews. The collection was organized according to families, cities, and provinces in Italy. As a result, he started to collect information about Italian Jewish families, including family trees. His collection is now in the archives of the Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center at Beit Hatfutsot in Tel Aviv: the photos, postcards and family trees of Jewish families of Italy will be digitalized. Mr. Padoa was happy to hear the news just before his death.

<https://www.bh.org.il/databases/jewish-genealogy/dr-meir-padoa-collection/>

Honors to Some Familiar Folks

The Federation of Genealogical Societies (FGS) reported in their FORUM magazine this fall the honorees for their annual awards. This year was filled with people you may know:

FORUM Writer’s Award went to Jane Neff Rollins, for her article “Labor Union Documents: Genealogically Relevant Sources,” which appeared in the Spring 2019. “Her contribution provided a wealth of information on the types of records available and how to find and use them for genealogy.”

Lou D. Szucs Service Award went to publisher and *Avotaynu* founder **Gary Mokotoff** for his many years of dedicated service to genealogy, and for helping to revolutionize the way we do research.

Rabbi Malcolm H. Stern Humanitarian Award honored **Miriam Weiner** for her leadership and contributions to the genealogical community. Miriam was an early traveler to the archives in Eastern Europe and paved the way for others to do the same. Her collection is now part of Jewishgen.org.

FREE through Sept. 24

Legacy Family Tree Webinars is celebrating 10 years of genealogy webinars by making 10 webinars available, unlocked and free through September 24, 2020. Included is Blaine Bettinger, the DNA expert, as well as Making Citations Easy, and Brick-Wall Busters. Go to:

https://familytreewebinars.com/intermediate_page.php?dipl_y_nm=top10

Page 3 is curated by Andrea Massion, JGSCV Board member



Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV) will hold a **Zoom** meeting:

Sunday, October 4, 2020 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Open only to JGSCV members (*see below for membership application)

Zoom link will be emailed to members a few days prior to the meeting.

THE PROGRAM:



Think Like a Reporter to Avoid Genealogy Mistakes



This talk will cover how more than two decades of journalistic experience has helped Jennifer as a genealogist, both to zero in on reliable information and not to be duped by unreliable information. You'll learn about using the "Law and Order" method (follow the "dun duns!") to track down information and how relying on simple principles like Occam's Razor where the most likely scenario is the least complicated. You'll learn how logic grids can help you get further. Ms. Mendelsohn will go over pitfalls like not blindly using Ancestry hints, assessing the credibility of sources, not being wedded to spelling, (hello, wildcard searches!) and why genealogy is like playing *Concentration*: you always have to remember the cards you've seen and turned over.

About Speaker Jennifer Mendelsohn

A seasoned journalist and ghostwriter, Jennifer Mendelsohn's work has appeared in numerous local and national publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Politico*, *Tablet*, *People* and *Slate*. A native Long Islander now based in Baltimore, Jennifer is also passionately engaged in the world of genealogy. She serves on the board of the JGS of Maryland, is the administrator of Facebook's Jewish genetic genealogy group, and is the creator of the social media movement known as #resistancegenealogy, which has received international media attention.

There is no charge for members of JGSCV to attend this Zoom meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV from our website: <https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/membership%20application.pdf>. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual and \$35 for a family. We welcome new members!

Highlights from Rescue and Resettlement: Researching Refugees from Nazi Germany

By Jan Meisels Allen

On September 13, JGSCV members were privileged to have Karen Franklin talk to us on *Rescue and Resettlement: Researching Refugees from Nazi Germany*. Researchers may face challenges in documenting relatives who were refugees from Europe during World War II. Not all those who fled followed well-worn routes, so identifying and tracking them involves the kind of creative sleuthing important for all historical research. Exit routes and countries of refuge covered in this presentation include British Guiana, the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Morocco and Egypt among others. Regardless of which country you are researching the techniques employed to obtain the records are examples of how to research, collaboration with colleagues and how to get around “brick walls” where one thinks there are no records.

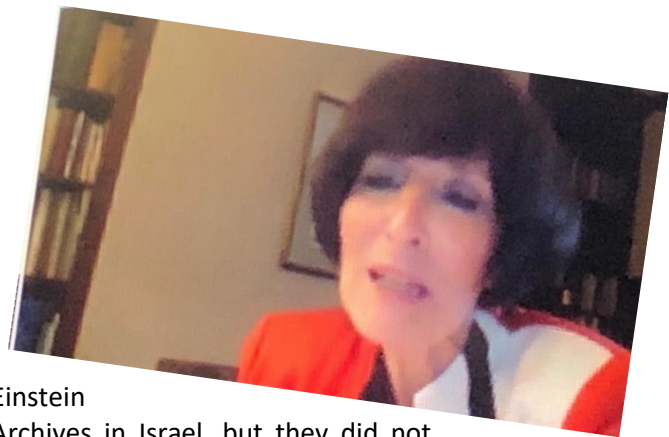
Bernstein Family

Karen began her program with a photograph of Alexander Suesskind Bernstein (1765-1849), her third great-grandfather from Posen. Evidently, there are supposedly to have been 13 “identical” portraits of him, and she had not been able to find any of them other than the one she had in her home. The thirteen were one for each of his children.



About 50 years ago, while rummaging through her pile of documents, she found a letter from Albert Einstein to her grandmother, dated February 19, 1939, to requesting her to send an affidavit for her cousin Alice Bernstein. Neither Karen nor her father knew who Alice

Karen Franklin presenting via Zoom
Bernstein was. Years later Karen corresponded with the Albert



Einstein Archives in Israel, but they did not have much information on Alice. Then Karen contacted USCIS, and she was able to receive Alice’s “A” file (<https://www.uscis.gov/records/genealogy>). The “A” file gave a lot of information about what she did in US and in Europe. It also showed she was in Chicago-and Karen had no idea why Chicago. From a DNA test that Karen (FTDNA) took, she has a clue! Karen heard from a granddaughter of Milton Bernstein, Rita. Milton’s father had met Karen’s father at the pier when he (Karen’s father) immigrated as a refugee in the 1930s. The families had lost touch over the decades since the 1960s when the Bernsteins moved – to Chicago. Perhaps their presence in the Windy City was because of these Bernstein cousins. Rita also had a copy Alexander’s portrait.

Shortly after hearing from Rita, Karen learned of a third portrait, owned by Jane Gurau, who had seen a copy of Karen’s portrait in a book by Edward Luft about resources for Jew from Posen, *The Jews of Posen Province in the Nineteenth Century*.

The presentation gave hints about strategies for research. Many of the cases presented showed the collaboration with researchers and archivists. How she was successful in finding out about these people in her family histories should be seen as an avenue for each of us to pursue in our research endeavors.

The subject of refugees is the core of the presentation. The situation of refugees in the 1930s was dire. They required affidavits from relatives to sponsor them. The Museum of Jewish Heritage had an exhibit on this, about 10 years ago, called *Against the Odds*. The focus of the exhibit was the morass of paperwork that the refugee had to provide to get a visa. The attitude in the United States and around the world was to “keep them out”. In a 1938 U.S. Public Opinion poll, 67% wanted to keep refugees out; 20% allow but maintain quotas and 10% had no opinion and 5% said to allow them in. The issue of immigration is today still a volatile issue in the United States and elsewhere.

Lehman Family

About 12 years ago, Karen was hired as a guest curator by the Museum of Jewish Heritage for an exhibition about the Morgenthau family. The Museum of Jewish Heritage is the parent of JewishGen.org, Inc. This dynasty, Henry Morgenthau, Sr. was the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during the outbreak of World War I, and Henry Morgenthau, Jr. served as Secretary of the Treasury during the Great Depression and World War II. Robert M. Morgenthau served as the longest-serving district attorney in New York City—34 years. While doing her research she came across the *Fourth Report of the Mayer Lehman Charity Fund June 1, 1941-June 1, 1942*.

After the exhibition work, Karen continued research on the Mayer Lehman Charity Fund, a family foundation to bring Jews over from Europe. This is the same family as Lehman Brothers, the former financial investment firm, and family of former New York State Governor Herbert H. Lehman, who was later to become a US Senator. The story begins with the three brothers, Mayer, Emmanuel and Henry Lehman in the 1850s in Alabama. Now, expanding her research, she is using Columbia University’s Special Collections in the Baker Library as well as other repositories worldwide.

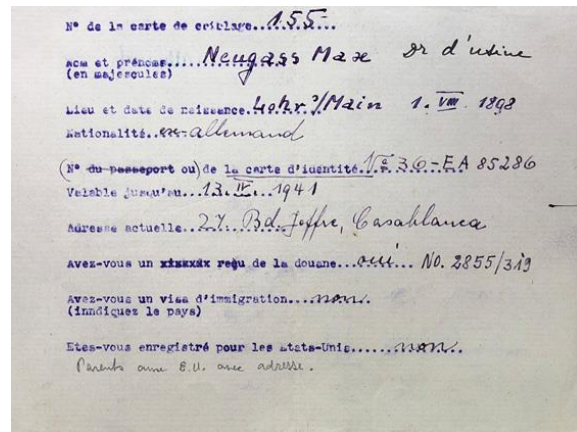
What Karen found was that the Lehman’s supported the families they brought over, some for over 35 years. These were not necessarily close relatives but third and

October 2020

fourth cousins. By 1942, they had given over 100 affidavits— due to their wealth they were able to do more than most families. But their wealth and prestige did not stop the government paper machine from interfering with an expeditious resolve to the visa issue. By 1942, 39 of the almost 100 names of the family list were still in Europe; only three living in areas controlled by the Nazis at that time survived the war.

When Herbert H. Lehman was Governor, (1933-1942), hundreds of people whom he did not know were writing to him,” I am your cousin, help me get to the United States”. Governor Lehman asked his niece, Dorothy Bernhard, to coordinate efforts to assist these families, administer family funds to get them to the United States and help them set up in business, once they arrived in the United States.

In the Fall of 1941, the last refugee ships left Europe. In the archives of the “Joint”, JDC Archives (<https://archives.jdc.org/>), Karen found information on one of them, *The Navemar*. With a capacity of 300, she took on 1,900 refugees to get them out of Europe as the doors were closing. It took them seven weeks to get to the United States due to visas and various port problems. Karen has found a relative sponsored by the Lehmans who was born in 1936 and was on that ship. Karen contacted Dorothy Bernhard’s son who today is in his late 80’s and bought him to her home and put him on a Zoom call with this person who was on *Navemar*. The relative thanked Dorothy’s son for saving his life.



A moral question arose: This person did not remember his horrific passage to the United States. Similar to Holocaust survivors, do you tell them their story? Karen felt that the man’s children could take on this responsibility now that they knew, and she gave only general details to the “survivor”.

More From the Fourth Report

The Art Dealer. There were over 100 names in Dorothy Bernhard's reports, and hundreds of others she researched. While preparing this lecture, Karen was looking for a specific case in which the father of a refugee later became an art dealer was interned in Dutch Guiana, but she couldn't remember the name. While a movie on Netflix, "The Spy", an Israeli thriller, she remembered the art dealer's name: Emmerich. Noah Emmerich, the actor, was the son of André Emmerich, the art dealer, whose father was helped by the Lehmans. One never knows where "hints" will appear! Karen shared letters between Governor Lehman and Lilly Emmerich, who wrote to the Governor asking for help to get her husband, Hugo Emmerich, out of the prison camp in Dutch Guinea. He was imprisoned as a political prisoner. Because he was a German citizen, he was accused of being a spy, part of the 5th Column (a term meant to be Nazi supporters within foreign nations during World War II). Using French passports, Lilly and the children had already come to the United States. With the Lehmans' assistance, Hugo was able to follow some months later.

Karen also showed newspaper clippings as another tool for genealogists.

Max Neugass

Yet another example of family member asking the Lehman's for help was Max Neugass, who was in a camp outside of Casablanca (such things were not shown in the movie Casablanca). He was in France since 1938 and placed himself at the disposal of the French authorities at the beginning of the war. Fifty ships left for Casablanca with Jewish refugees from Vichy France. It is possible that Max was on one of these ships. This information Karen was able to find using the archives of Central Archives of History of Jewish People in Israel. Karen thanked Philip Trauring from Israel for helping her obtain the copies of the document from the Central Archives.

Through the Archives of the Joint Distribution Committee, Karen was able to find the actual ship's manifest, the *Winnipeg*. It indicates that Max was going to his sister, Selma Stern, in New York. There is a book about the refugees' exodus to the French Caribbean, *Escape from Vichy*, by Eric T. Jennings. The ship was originally headed to Martinique, a French controlled Caribbean Island. However, the ship was boarded by the

Dutch on behalf of the Allies, but the refugees were suspected of being spies, and were awakened in the middle of the night and interrogated. The ship was rerouted to Trinidad. There, most refugees boarded ships to New York City. However, four refugees, including Max, boarded a plane for San Juan, Puerto Rico, and from there to Miami, Florida.

Miami Index to Arrivals from
Casablanca via San Juan to
Miami Ancestry.com

MANIFEST		Part of	Miami	Date	6/11/41	Serial No.	1855/26
Family name	HEUGASS	Given name	MAX	Accompanied by			
C.I.V. No.	25480	Place and date of issue	Casablanca-4/11/41	Section and classification	5	Quota country charged	Germany
Place of birth (town, county, state)	Morocco	Age	42	Sex	M	W. H.	Salesman
Language or languages spoken	Ger. French	Religion	Hebrew	Without		Last permanent residence (town, county, state)	Paris, France
Name and address of nearest relative or friend to notify in emergency (name, address, city, state)	Helene Nelly Senzlar (cr), 79 Rue Nationale, Casablanca, Morocco						
Ever in U.S.	no	From		Is		When	Walter Seemann
Destination, and name and complete address of relative or friend to give notice							
Selma Stern (sis), 561 W. 141 St., N. Y. C.							
Name of ship	Winnipeg	Ever arrested and deported, or excluded from admission	no	Fee paid in coming and time remaining	\$124	Height	5 ft. 5 in.
Complexion	Dark	Hair	Black	Eyes	Brown	Build	Slender
Complexion	Dark	Hair	Black	Eyes	Brown	Build	Slender
Special and date of landing, and name of steamer	Arrived by						
Previously examined at	San Juan	Date	6/11/41	Previous disposition	Admitted	Period of stay	30 days
Examined by	Held for 301						
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, Immigration and Naturalization Service. Form No. 10-5719							

Wanting more information, as Max had no children, Karen went to the children of Selma Stern, his sister, and they knew nothing about him. They did not know their grandmother, Selma Stern, so Karen was able to share stories with them about her and Max.

Bernd Boettingheimer—Murdered in the Shoah?

To research Bernd Boettingheimer, Karen used the repositories of Yad Vashem, YIVO, Memorial de la Shoah and more. Karen demonstrated that multiple resources were needed to obtain the fullest story about each case.

In 1941, Dorothy Bernhard applied for new visas for Bernd and his parents, Betty and Guenther Boettingheimer. They were already interned in the Camp

Seeman's Brazil Consulate Card

REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL		Modelo n.º 10
FICHA CONSULAR DE QUALIFICAÇÃO		81190
Esta ficha, expedida em duas vias, será entregue à Polícia Marítima e à Imigração no porto de destino		
Nome por extenso: Luis Leopold Seeman		
Admissão em território nacional em caráter: Temporário		
Nos termos do art. 77 - § 1º - da Dec. n.º 10.077 - de 1943		
Lugar e data de nascimento: Aschbach, Alemanha, 7/18/00		
Nacionalidade: alemã - Estado civil: solteiro		
Filiação (nome do Pai e da Mãe): Hugo Seeman, e Jenny Seeman, alemã		
Profissão: Comerciante		
Residência no país de origem: Data: não O interessado também declara: não		
Lugar e data de emissão: Rio de Janeiro, 10 de Junho de 1941		
Lugar e data de validade: Rio de Janeiro, 10 de Junho de 1941		
Lugar e data de validade: Rio de Janeiro, 10 de Junho de 1941		
F. 131839 expedida pela autoridade de: Porto de Polícia		
Passaporte n.º: não		
de: não		
emitido em: 10 de Junho de 1941		
em: 10 de Junho de 1941		
Assinado por: Luis Leopold Seeman		
Assinado por: [Signature]		
Assinado por: [Signature]		

Rivesaltes in France. Dorothy Bernhard tried for three years to get visas for them. In August 1942, Guenther Boettingheimer's visa was denied, the reason because the Lehman's had requested the visas and the State Department said they were not closely enough related.

Another indication the US government tried everything they could to keep refugees out. This time they could not say they did not have adequate financial resources as the Lehman's certainly had the funding, therefore the government used the excuse of not being closely enough related.



On JewishGen's Holocaust database Karen found

documentation that Bernd was a hidden child in France in an orphanage, and he had not died as other documents inferred. A good reminder to look for multiple sources to make certain that your research is as accurate as possible.

Karen showed a photo of his wedding in 1962, in New Jersey. His name had been changed here. His mother also survived and lived to the age of 100.

Seeman family

For this family Karen was able to find documents from the Leo Baeck Institute Archives, by researching their town of Aschbach. (Another genealogical hint for research is to research the towns of origin). She has not yet been able to find out exactly how they are related to the Lehman's, but Babette Seeman wrote to the Governor saying they were cousins. This family was already in Brazil and was trying to get the rest of the family out of Europe. Babette's father, Jakob Seeman, was the last Jew in Aschbach. Using resources from

From a "non-Lehman" family research project, Karen also used the example of the Wertheimer family who immigrated in 1923. Albert Wertheimer returned to Europe a few years later, and his granddaughter assumed he died in the Holocaust. The family wanted to find other relatives and using MyHeritage (<https://www.myheritage.com/>), Karen found a family tree on their website. The tree identified a half-aunt who was murdered in the Shoah. This family was from Croatia. Many survivors from Croatia fled to Israel, and Karen hopes to learn more in the months to come.

Another resource was Alexandria Egypt as a route to Palestine.

Karen also emphasized the diversity of refugee experiences, and how newspaper research uncovered a story of four sisters who were reunited 58 years after the first ones had come to the United States. The last to arrive was a sister who survived the Holocaust.

Karen is still researching and looking for assistance: Descendants of Frida Irmgard Mahler of São Paulo—anyone who can help research Brazil?

Kurt Wertheim(er) and the fate of his Croatian relatives.

Information of Dutch Guinea internment camps

Any other copies of portraits of Alexander Suesskind Bernstein?

Karen would like to meet the actor, Noah Emmerich. If anyone knows him, she would appreciate an introduction.

Question and Answer Period

During the question and answer session, Karen said it was our colleagues that helped as she demonstrated with some obtaining documents in archives that were not geographically close to Karen and that did not have the information online.

Suzanne Scarberry mentioned her father's business was called Pulitzer Wertheim and she does not know if that Wertheim is related to the Wertheim's Karen is studying. Karen did not know but would look into that.

Hal Bookbinder suggested placing the name of the town into "keyword" for either Ancestry or MyHeritage which may be of assistance in finding towns where records are mentioned.

Ken Saul asked about displaced persons who were unable to get to the United States or Palestine and asked

Name	Date of Birth Place of Birth	Nationality	Place Hidden	Page	Comments
BOETTIGHEIMER, Bernd	07-Sep-1934	German	Brout-Vernet Chateau des Moreilles 1943?	15	
BOETTIGHEIMER, Bernard	07-Sep-1934 Adelshausen	German	Brout-Vernet Chateau des Moreilles Nov 1942	16	

FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/>), she found a document of about Babette's brother, Luis Leopold Seeman in Brazil

what happened to them after the war when they could not immigrate. Jews were in DP camps to 1950s. JGSCV member Debbie Enenstein is a DP survivor and she mentioned she left for in the U.S. the end of 1951, arriving January 2, 1952. after applying in 1946. They came through HIAS (<https://www.hias.org/>) and so you may want to contact them for records. It was mentioned there is a new book about Displaced Persons, *The Last Million: Europe's Displaced Persons from World War to Cold War* by David Nasaw. Records are available in Arolsen Archives on displaced persons as well.

Ken asked the percentage of people who had sponsors how many got approved as there must have been a quota system. In the 1939-1940 it went by the numbers. But due to roadblocks the State Department put up, Karen said it really hampered getting the visas.

Issie Perel also mentioned that his parents were in a DP camp and immigrated to Canada in 1948, as the United States was not accepting refugees. This was a practice by the United States several times in its history.

Ellen Husted said she has seen lists of family members who died at Auschwitz and she wanted to know if there was anything she could do to find if anyone survived and where she can research. Karen recommended to cast a wide net, posting on JewishGen Discussion List (to subscribe: main+subscribe@groups.jewishgen.org, to post main@groups.jewishgen.org), JewishGen Portal (<https://www.facebook.com/JewishGenealogyPortal>) etc. Karen also mentioned searching widely for descendants of spouses' branches. One of the photographs she obtained was from the paternal not the maternal side (blood-related side) of the family and she had not thought to contact the other side of the family.

Stephen Weinstein asked if Einstein came in as a refugee or as a scientist. He was in the US in the 1920s or 1930s before he returned and when he returned Karen did not know if he came in as a refugee. He was actively involved refugee assistance, and Karen will look up the technical status of Albert Einstein as a refugee.

Karen said one of the saddest parts of the Lehman family history was over time how many people who could not get papers through the government and yet money was not an issue. Regardless of his wealth or political power, there were many Governor Lehman could not save.

The issue of privacy is also something to keep in mind. Stories are not part of us they belong to the immigrants. Not everything needs to be told.

As indicated by Karen there are many archives and colleagues that helped her along the way. She expressed her gratefulness for people who helped her for access to state department and consular records in the Caribbean, and elsewhere. These included: JewishGen, Leo Baeck Institute, JGS New York, The Lehman Family, Arolsen Archives, Fellow genealogists: Esther Brumberg, Philip Trauring, Dr. Joan Salomon, Ilona Moradof and Arthur Zimmerman.

Karen's email is karenfranklin@gmail.com if anyone needs to contact her.



Karen Franklin is the Director of Family Research at the Leo Baeck Institute; Co-founder and Director of Outreach for the Obermayer Awards; Board Member of the National Association of Retired Reform Rabbis; Past co-chair of JewishGen's Board of Governors; Past president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies and recipient of its Lifetime Achievement Award; Past-chair of the Council of American Jewish Museums.


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JGSCV Updates

CORRECTION: Last month's *Venturing Into Our Past* incorrectly reported on a new JRI-Poland feature. On page 9, inside the story, "Highlights From: IAJGS 40th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy", the paragraph beginning with "JRI-Poland will be introducing a registration and log-in system . . ." was incorrect. It should read, "**JRI-Poland will be introducing a registration and log-in system as well as a membership option. Log-in will be required to access the new website and search system. Researchers becoming members will have access to enhanced features of the new website. Details of membership fees will be announced in September. No prices were shared at the conference.**" We regret the error.

Your JGS has been exceptionally busy these past few months working on continuing to offer unique programs with compelling speakers while managing the personal, professional and health challenges facing us all. JGSCV meetings will be a **MEMBERS ONLY** benefit offered via Zoom until further notice.

JGSCV is a participant in Ralph's and Food for Less Community Awards. We have been advised that you need not reregister this year. If you are already registered and have JGSCV as your charity of choice there is nothing more to do. If you are not yet registered please go to our website to learn how to participate: <https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/Ralphs%20Community%20Contribution%20Program.pdf>.



Remember when shopping at Amazon go to: AmazonSmile <https://smile.amazon.com/> from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.
JGSCV's unique AmazonSmile link is: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0957875>
First, you need to create an Amazon account or sign-in to an existing one: <https://tinyurl.com/oycgnyl> For more information See: <https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/Amazon%20Smile%20Instructions.pdf>

Please remember to complete the 2020 Census form. It's only 10 questions unlike previous censuses which have tens of questions. For your family's future genealogists if for no other reason, please complete the questionnaire. This is a once in a decade requirement, and it takes only moments to complete. Go to: <https://2020census.gov/> and fill out the form. If you have students living at home or at school, there is guidance regarding the state in which they should be counted: <https://2020census.gov/en/what-is-2020-census/focus/grads.html>.

JGSCV Welcomes New Member JONATHON FRIEND

Practicing Safe Computing #59: “We are holding a package for you”



By Hal Bookbinder (Number 59 in a series)

I just received the following two texts on my smart phone (these are the exact texts) . . .



I immediately went to my browser and Googled, “urgent alert for your USPS package” and “we came across a parcel from June pending for you.” You can likely guess the results.

“HORRY COUNTY, S.C. (WMBF) – The Horry County Fifteenth Circuit solicitor is advising residents to be on the lookout for a text scam circulating to get their information. According to a post on the solicitor’s Facebook page, the text message appears to be from the U.S. Postal Service with a link saying a package is being delivered. Solicitor Jimmy Richardson said he reached out to the USPS fraud investigators after he received a text four times about a package being delivered to him. USPS officials said the text is a phishing scheme to get information from individuals as soon as they click the link. According to the USPS, they will not send text messages to people unless they had previously signed up for such messages about a particular package delivery.”

There have been several similar stories from newsrooms around the country. People routinely fall for these postal, FedEx, or UPS delivery scams. Once you go to the link, you will be asked to identify yourself by providing things like your full name, mailing address, driver’s license, date of birth and a major credit card “for identification purposes only.”

You might be instructed to call a legitimate looking number, which may even appear to be in your own area code, subtly gaining your trust. The person you speak to is friendly, sympathetic and very believable. When you say that you were not expecting a package the caller convincingly explains to you that it looks like a gift.

With your personal information they are able to start making charges in your name, steal your identity or sell your personal information on the dark web. They may have even downloaded a virus. As you wait for the delivery it dawns on you that this might not be on the up-and-up. Trust that inner voice.

Today, we order more and more for home delivery and may even forget exactly what we ordered and when. Scam artists depend on it. Google the text you just received. You will almost always learn that it is a scam. Verify legitimacy before providing your personal identifying information, not after.

If you do fall for this scam, take immediate action. Freeze your account and carefully watch all charges. See previous articles for additional steps that you can take. Reporting the scam is promoted as your civic duty. But, better not to have been taken in the first place.

This is the fifty-ninth in a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAIGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAIGS Lifetime Achievement Award and his online skills are well documented. All the Safe Computing articles by Hal Bookbinder are available on the JGSCV website www.jgscv.org under Noteworthy.



Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II

A Series of Remembrances by JGSCV Members

This year is the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and JGSCV members and friends are contributing stories about themselves or their ancestors who fought in the war. If you have a story to share, please let Allan know at newslettereditor@jgscv.org.

JGSCV member Debby Wenkart writes about her paternal grandfather, Isak Wenkart.

Isak Wenkart (1896-1948)

My paternal grandfather, Isak Wenkart, was a citizen of Austria who was caught up in the wave of antisemitism and turmoil of World War II in Europe. His story of survival is amazing and tragic. Isak's comfortable family life in Vienna was upended by the Germans in 1938 when he was arrested during Kristallnacht and sent to a concentration camp in Germany. Months later he was released by the Nazi's but ordered to leave the country or risk return to a concentration camp. The British Jewry mobilized and used their influence to rescue 4000 Austrian and German Jews and provide refuge for the men in 1939 at Kitchener Camp in England. My grandfather was fortunate to find safety at Kitchener Camp. But when hostilities between Britain and Nazi Germany escalated in 1940, the British became fearful of the German speaking Jews in their midst. My grandfather's temporary refuge at Kitchener Camp was followed by yet another abrupt departure. This time my grandfather was sent to an internment camp at the Isle of Man and within months he was deported via the notorious HMT Dunera to an internment camp in the outback of Australia. After nearly 4 years of separation from his family and loss of liberty and livelihood and family, Isak was reunited with some of his family in Palestine. This is my grandfather's story.

My grandfather was born in 1896 in a town called Zaleszchyki on the eastern edge of the Austrian Hungarian Empire, near the border with Romania. Soviet invasion and virulent antisemitism spurred pogroms that compelled Isak to flee to Vienna where he established a business and started a family. On the night of November 1938, Kristallnacht ("the Night of Broken Glass"), Isak was arrested along with thousands of other Jewish men and sent to the Dachau concentration camp. Several months later Isak was released under the condition that he leave Austria or risk imprisonment again. This was not a simple matter as very few countries were accepting Jewish refugees and the Nazi's had looted much of their property. The British public was so outraged by the mass looting, destruction and murder orchestrated by the Nazi's during Kristallnacht that the British Parliament agreed to provide 4,000 visas to

October 2020

World Jewish Relief Committee

German and Austrian Jews to come to England under the proviso that it was temporary and would not be funded by the government. The British government granted a “group visa” and the Vienna Jewish Committee selected men most “at risk” between the ages of 17-45 and who possessed skills to be employable in the future.

My grandfather was 1 of 1,000 Viennese Jews that obtained a visa to Britain. The Central British Fund (now named World Jewish Relief) provided the financial support. American and British Jews and as well as the community raised the money to rent, renovate and fund the care of the refugees at Kitchener Camp. Within a matter of months, Kitchener Camp was established in Kent, England. It had been a World War I army camp but it was abandoned and in serious disrepair when the refugees arrived. My grandfather arrived in April 1939 along with 130 other Viennese Jews. Kitchener Camp needed skilled workers to help set up the camp. My grandfather stated that his occupation was a “shirt maker” and that he had been a salesman in Vienna, although I don’t know what his job was at the camp. Originally Kitchener Camp was planned as a “transmigration” camp. In other words, the men would stay temporarily at the camp while pursuing visas to other foreign countries, as Britain was clear that the men would be unable to stay in Britain. The Central British Fund planned to continue to provide refuge to more Jewish men escaping

Europe as this group obtained visas to other countries and left England.

Everyday life at the camp is described in Clare Ungerson's award winning book "Four Thousand Lives: The Rescue of German Jewish Men to Britain, 1939". Daily life at the camp consisted of work, English lessons, recreational activities and learning a vocational skill. There were restrictions on what the men could do such as travel freely and obtain paid employment but there were opportunities for the men to leave the camp to go into the nearby small town of Sandwich. The presence of a local fascist group was a potential problem. There was initial concern about the presence of German speaking refugees in town but overall the reception toward the refugees was welcoming. There were opportunities for the refugees to interact with the local townspeople. In addition, the camp brought much needed revenue to Sandwich as the camp purchased supplies from the local community.

In September 1939, lawyers met with each man to investigate their loyalty and to determine under the Alien Act of 1919 if the individual was a "friendly or enemy alien". The tribunal deemed my grandfather, as well as most of the Jewish refugees held at Kitchener Camp as "friendly aliens" and their documents were stamped "victim of Nazi oppression". The men told the investigators of the horrific treatment they received at the hands of the Nazi's. The investigators were so horrified that they published a letter in *The (London) Times* on November 1, 1939 describing the shocking details of the refugee's treatment at the hands of the Nazi's, the confiscation of their property, the loss of their employment and the "aryanisation" of their businesses. At the time Parliament was considering appeasement with Nazi Germany and this letter shocked the British public.

In May and June 1940 France fell to Nazi Germany. England suspected Nazi infiltrators and spies. All German speaking individuals residing in England became suspect, even those Jews who had fled Nazi persecution and had been living peacefully at Kitchener Camp. Those "friendly aliens" like my grandfather now were reclassified as "enemy aliens", irrespective of the findings of the earlier tribunal. Winston Churchill infamously said "collar the lot" and without any warning, Kitchener Camp was closed in May 1940. My grandfather, as well as other, Kitchener men were sent to internment camps on the Isle of Man. The English residents of this seaside resort area resented the internees as they were forced to leave their boarding homes and surrender the space for the internees. The townspeople also resented the internees because the Jewish men were well taken care of by the government while the townspeople endured shortages and rationing due to the war.

The next unfortunate chapter of my grandfather's life was the decision by the British to intern the refugees far from England. On July 10, 1940 my grandfather was sent to Australia on the HMT Dunera, by all accounts a horrific voyage that took 57 days. The 2,542 "enemy alien" Jewish men were severely mistreated by the British navy aboard the ship. The men were beaten, robbed and ill fed. When news of their mistreatment reached England, the captain was punished. When the men arrived in Australia, by all accounts they were in poor health and unkempt. The Australians were led to believe that these men were POWs but in fact they were "refugees from Nazi oppression". After disembarking in Sydney, the men boarded a train to Hay, an internment camp, located in a desolate place in the outback. The men's health suffered in the desert heat as these men were accustomed to the mild climate of Vienna and Berlin. The Australians quickly learned these men were not dangerous as many of them were professors, doctors, students, etc. Letters flew between Australia and England. Australia felt duped! England sent Major Julian Layton to Hay to deal with the internees. Major Layton was familiar with the internees as he had worked with them at Kitchener Camp.

In March 1941, Ben Zion Patkin, The Honorary Secretary of the Zionist Federation of Australia and New Zealand, and the author of the book "The Dunera Internees" was instrumental in helping my grandfather as well as the other internees obtain their release. Mr. Patkin, Major Layton, as well as other community members, prevailed

Genealogy Odds and Ends

Individuals who had their DNA tested at ancestry.com received a message that the site updated its algorithms to what they say consider to be more precise. The result is that DNA ethnicity reports may have changed. Jan Meisels Allen reports that, “while I am still 100% Ashkenazi Jewish they say my ancestry is now all from Western and Central Europe no longer Eastern Europe. When I looked at their new map I saw that nothing really changed as they now have Poland, Slovakia and Hungary in Central Europe and my Galician roots (Brody) are now western Ukraine located in their Western Europe.” It is suggested that if Ancestry has re-defined your ethnicity, check the map to see where they show your countries of origin.

YIVO has extensive immigration collections: rich sources of information about the experiences of some of the over 2.5 million Jews from Eastern Europe who immigrated to America from 1881-1924, Jewish refugees who sought refuge from Hitler in the 1930s-40s, and later waves of Jewish immigrants.

Every one of those immigrants has a unique story. And every piece of paper, every photograph in YIVO’s immigration and migration collections is a gateway to those stories.

To view these photographs go to:

<https://immigrationusa.yivo.org/exhibits/show/immigrationstories/1870s1920s>

Dick Eastman’s Online Genealogy Newsletter recently included his excellent blog, “Consider the Source: Original, Derivative, or Copy”. Mr. Eastman helps define what we should consider an “original document”. Go to: <https://blog.eogn.com/2020/09/11/consider-the-source-original-derivative-or-copy/>

Since the pandemic began, ancestry.com has partnered with ProQuest to offer **for free** a special collection of records in the Ancestry Library Edition that will enhance the offerings of any public library. That free access has been extended through the end of December 2020 by using your local library card and following the process established by your local library. Check your library that they have the Ancestry Library Collection.

JGSCV MEMBERS' FAMILY STORIES

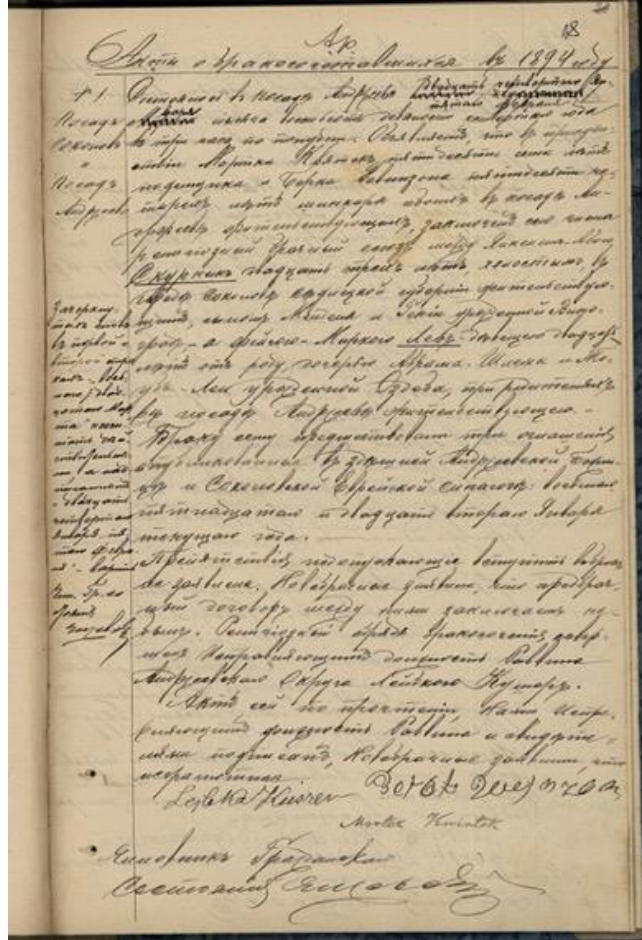
JGSCV's June speaker Joan Adler advised genealogists to write down whatever you know about your ancestor(s) and not worry about the style, chronology or even whether it seems to make sense. Just do it! We think that's a great idea and *VENTURING INTO OUR PAST* began a new series as a result several months ago "FAMILY STORIES" which continues this month. JGSCV board member and treasurer Karen Lewy shares a special remembrance.

"My maternal grandfather, Charles Skurnik, was one of 6 children born to Jacob (Jankel) and Fanny (Feiga Mirka) Leff. The Polish word Skornik means tanner. On the passenger list, his given name is Szloma, and the family always called him Sol. He changed his name to Charles after he married Minnie Cohen from Baltimore, MD. After Jacob and Pop Charlie (what I called him) came to the United States in 1921, they became butchers in New York.

I have been able to find the Polish record for the marriage of Jankiel and Fajga (right) and used JewishGen's ViewMate to have it translated (below)."

It happened in the town of Andrzejewo Jan 24/Feb 5, 1894, witnesses: Morko KWATEK, 57, and Berko REWINZON, 54 the marr. of Jankiel Aba SKURNIK, bachelor, 23, from Sokolow, Siedlec gub. son of Mendel and Genia nee WINOGROD to Fajga Mirka LEW, maiden, 20, dau. of Abram Szelma and Touba Lei nee OZDOBA from A. (next are the ban dates). Lejbka KUSZER, rabbin of A.

"My mother has written a memory of visiting New York and watching her Bubbie pluck the feathers from the chickens in a butcher shop. Pop Charlie moved to Baltimore after marriage, and became a grocer, owning several stores. My father later went into the grocery business with him. I remember visiting the store and going into the back room with Irving, the meat man, to see the carcasses hanging. On days when the store was closed, we went with our father to check on the refrigeration, but my brothers and I pretended we were playing the game *Supermarket Sweep*."



Passenger List with Szloma

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE													
LIST OF MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES													
ALL ALIENS arriving at a port of continental United States from a foreign port or a port of the insular possessions of the United States, and all aliens arriving at a port of said insular possessions from a foreign port, a port of continental United States, or a port of the insular possessions of the United States.													
This (public) sheet is for the listing of													
S. S. LAPLAND Passengers sailing from NEW YORK MAY 1901													
HEAD-STAR NUMBER (The number of the manifest for this ship)	NAME OF PASSENGER		AGE	SEX	COUNTRY OF BIRTH	CITY OF BIRTH	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	RELIGION	MARITAL STATUS	*Last permanent residence		Final destination (Name of vessel and agent)
	Family name	Given name									Country	City or town	
10	SKURNIK	ABBA	30	M	POLAND	SOBOLOW					POLAND	KAZIMIERZ	DAVIDSON-FELIX SKURNIK, HULLONA ST., NEW YORK
11	SKURNIK	FANJA	20	F	POLAND	KAZIMIERZ					POLAND	KAZIMIERZ	DAVIDSON-FELIX SKURNIK, HULLONA ST., NEW YORK
12	LEWY	ABRAHAM	37	M	POLAND	KAZIMIERZ					POLAND	KAZIMIERZ	DAVIDSON-FELIX SKURNIK, HULLONA ST., NEW YORK
13	LEWY	TOUBA	35	F	POLAND	KAZIMIERZ					POLAND	KAZIMIERZ	DAVIDSON-FELIX SKURNIK, HULLONA ST., NEW YORK

October 2020

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates through December 2021



ALL MEETINGS WILL BE RESERVED FOR MEMBERS ONLY VIA ZOOM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, October 4th 1:30-3:30PM via Zoom
Ask the Experts begins at 1:10 PM

Jennifer Mendelsohn will demonstrate how more than two decades of journalistic experience has helped her as a genealogist. We will learn how to zero in on reliable information and not to be duped by the unreliable.

Until further notice, all future meetings will be held on Sunday from 1:30-3:30 PM

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
Nov. 1	Marlis Glaser Humphrey	Master Catalog for Jewish Genealogy: The DoJR Project
Dec. 6	Genie Milgrom	Following in the Footsteps and Remnants of the Crypto Jews"
Jan. 3	Jarrett Ross	1.Iberia to Amsterdam: A genealogical Look at the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam. 2.Forensic Genetic genealogy: A Baby Doe Case Review
Feb. 14	Marian Smith	Researching USCIS Records
Mar. 7	Amy Wachs	Our Eastern European Roots: We Are What Our ancestors Ate
Apr. 10	TBA	Yom Hashoah Program TBA
May 2	TBA	TBA

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
June 6	TBA	TBA
July 11	TBA	TBA
Aug. 15	TBA	TBA
No meeting to observe High Holidays		
Oct. 3	TBA	TBA
Nov. 7	TBA	TBA
Dec. 12	Chanukah Party/Membership Meeting	

Sad News

On September 18th founding JGSCV member Phoebe Frank died. As noted by her husband JGSCV founding board member and creator of this newsletter, Werner Frank, "Phoebe was an extraordinarily talented person who radiated a passion for life and all it offered". Phoebe also was the designer of JGSCV's logo. May her memory be a blessing.



2021 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 2021

Date _____

Check one:

This is a New Membership _____ Renewal _____

Single \$ 30.00 _____ + \$1.00** Family* \$35.00 _____ + \$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 \$ _____

Security Fee Fund \$ _____

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for any 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 _____

Home telephone _____ Mobile telephone _____

E-mail address _____

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

