

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



JGSCV

November 2020

Volume 16 Issue 2

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We hope you are well and safe and practicing safe distancing and wearing a mask when appropriate. 2020 has not been a good year for many reasons and thankfully we can see 2021 on the horizon which we all hope is better for everyone.

We have learned to cope and it's certainly been a "different" year. I attended my first Zoom wedding and this past Saturday I attended my great-grand nieces' bat mitzvah by live stream. We can all write in our family histories the different things we had to do this year so those who come after us can appreciate what we went through. With time at home more than usual, hopefully many of us have been able to add to our genealogy- not only our trees but our knowledge with the abundance of webinars and zoom programs that are available.

JGSCV was privileged to have as our October speaker Jennifer Mendelsohn talking about *Think Like a Reporter To Avoid Genealogy Mistakes*. We all learned from her enjoyable and educational program and we remember the dun duns! See the highlights on page 5.

Thank you to Marion Werle for facilitating the "Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner" before the beginning of the meeting. This is an opportunity to ask questions other than on the day's speaker's topic, and not only the expert chimes in.

In commemorating the end of World War II, please read about *WWII Entertainers* on page 14. We welcome personal WW II stories about your family. We are into our membership drive and so far about 29% have renewed. Those who join/renew for 2021 are eligible to have their names drawn for special prizes at the December 6 Zoom meeting. Like in past years, our Chanukah/Membership Drive meeting will have multiple prizes donated by many different genealogical organizations. We must **RECEIVE** your payment buy check or cash or dropped off at



Jennifer Mendelsohn
JGSCV's October Zoom Speaker

NEXT MEETING

Sunday Nov. 1st 1:30-3:30 PM

Members only ZOOM!

Master Catalog for Jewish Genealogy:
The DoJR Project



Marlis Glaser Humphrey, past president of IAJGS and professional genealogist, will explain how the DoJR Project will answer the question: "What records are available for my town?"

WWW.JGSCV.ORG

6052 Hackers Lane
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
818-889-6616

**2020 JGSCV BOARD
OF DIRECTORS**

**Jan Meisels Allen, President
and Program Chairman**
president@jgscv.org

**Helene Rosen, VP Membership,
Zoom Coordinator**
membership@jgscv.org

Karen Lewy, Treasurer
treasurer@jgscv.org

Diane Wainwood, Secretary
secretary@jgscv.org

**Warren Blatt, Member
Education** education@jgscv.org

**Allan Linderman,
Newsletter Editor**
newslettereditor@jgscv.org

**Andrea Massion, Page 3
Curator**
Andrea@jgscv.org

Israel Perel, Librarian
librarian@jgscv.org

Barbara Algaze, FSL
barbara@jgscv.org

Pat Fuller, Publicity
publicity@jgscv.org

David Oseas, Webmaster
webmaster@jgscv.org

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.

my home with advance appointment no later than **December 4**. I already have the following prizes: Ancestry Worldwide Subscription, Fold3.com, newspapers.com, Ancestry DNA test, 3 My Heritage subscriptions, 2 FT Maker Subscriptions, FT DNA, Legacy Software, Legacy webinars, Roots Magic software—that's 13 prizes and more may be coming. Please go to <https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/membership%20application.pdf> to print off the membership form which is also on page 24 of this newsletter.

For those of us who research New York City, and most of us do, we are very concerned about their proposed regulation which establishes a licensing requirement and fee for any documents, photographs etc. one wants to obtain. Not only are they proposing a license fee—and we don't object to the initial fee of obtaining the record or photograph—, but they are stating that is something one has to pay every time they wish to share it with their family or clients or use it when giving a presentation or publishing it in an online genealogy family tree. To learn more about this and sign on to the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society's landing page go to: <https://www.facebook.com/nyfamilyhistory/posts/3392122924143166> You do not have to be a subscriber to Facebook to access the post.

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>.

Hal Bookbinder continues with his series on Practicing Safe Computing on page 13 This month's subject is *Misleading Google Results*.

The US Supreme Court ruled on October 13 that the 2020 census need not collect census information through the original date of October 31, 2020. The Census Bureau said they will cease collecting census information on October 15. After that was too late to complete your census questionnaire.

JGSCV is still operating on the COVID-19 restrictions and our meeting November 1 meeting will be by Zoom. Guest speaker Marlis Glaser Humphrey will present "A Master Catalog for Jewish Genealogy: The DoJR Project- What You Need to Know". See meeting notice on page 4 for more information.

Jan Meisels Allen



Until Synagogues Open: Jewishjournal.com

In the October 9-15 paper edition of the Los Angeles Jewish Journal, Editor-in-Chief David Suissa announced that the newspaper's print edition is now on hold until the Journal's main distribution points, synagogues, are reopened. The Jewish Journal's website has been enhanced and expanded. "Our new Jewishjournal.com website will be as nourishing as ever. You'll get everything you love about the Journal and more," wrote Mr. Suissa. For those who long for paper, or reading without tech, the ability to print some of the Journal's popular sections will be available.

After 118 years, the *Jewish Advocate* announced they ceased print publication on September 25th. The paper was founded by Theodore Hertzl in 1902. In the past months, Canada's *Jewish Weekly*, the *Canadian News of Toronto and Montreal*, Britain's primary Jewish weekly *The Jewish Chronicle*, the *New York and New Jersey Jewish Week*, and the *Forward*, have either closed or ceased their print versions.

Guatemala's Holocaust Museum Mission

The Holocaust Museum in Guatemala City, Guatemala, has fulfilled its mission since opening in 2016. With 22,000 guided visits just in 2019, and more than 1,500 teachers trained in Holocaust studies, completed their mission to educate about inclusiveness, tolerance and prevention of anti-Semitism in Guatemalan society has been successful. Located in the historic center of Guatemala City, the Museum seeks to disseminate the universal lessons about genocide based on the work of its founding organization, Yahad-In-Unum of Paris, (Father Patrick Desbois). Another goal of the museum is to build an improved, harmonious society without violence.

**MUSEO
DEL HOLOCAUSTO
GUATEMALA.**

Guatemala was the site of civil war and the genocide of 200,000 native Mayans during the mid-20th century. The violence faced by the Mayan people peaked between 1978 and 1986. Catholic priests and nuns also often faced violence as they supported the rights of the Mayan people. The Holocaust Museum in Guatemala is only one of numerous programs, either legal, educational or informative, that hope to add to the healing of this Central American country. Read more at: <http://www.mdh.org.gt/>

Reviewing Your Genealogy Situation

It bears repeating that to review one's research and sources ever so often makes for a more accurate family tree. Our current genealogic era allows us to peruse the latest databases online with more and more sources coming online every few months. Time also changes our perspective of what's valuable to save for future generations. With that said, try a search on centropa.org of your town or district. "*Centropa* is a non-profit, Jewish historical institute dedicated to preserving 20th century Jewish family stories and photos from Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans," through films, books and exhibitions. To read a biography of someone from your shtetl shines a light on life outside of vital documents. Find out at: <https://www.centropa.org> and enter biography in the search field.

Page Three 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, November 1, 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

A Master Catalog for Jewish Genealogy: The DoJR Project – What You Need to Know

The biggest barrier genealogists encounter is the absence of the records they need. The IAJGS has launched a project to address that need. The Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide project (DoJR) is creating a comprehensive, crowdsourced on-line catalog of available record collections, JCat. JCat will answer the question, “What records are available for my town” and will provide a home for exposing record collections previously hidden or unknown. We will discuss the progress of the project and how you can help bring more of your town’s records to light.

About Speaker Marlis Glaser Humphrey



Marlis Glaser Humphrey is the industry’s foremost expert on next generation family history publishing, a professional genealogist, and a frequent speaker at NGS, FGS, IAJGS, and RootsTech conferences. She is President of the Florida State Genealogical Society, Immediate Past President of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, Director at Large of the National Genealogical Society and Chairman of the Documentation of Jewish Records (DoJR) Worldwide Project. Marlis holds a MS in Management of

Technology and a BA in Russian.

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 *Think Like a Reporter To Avoid Genealogy Mistakes*

By Jan Meisels

On October 4, JGSCV members were privileged to have Jennifer Mendelsohn (right, on Zoom)



talk to us on *Think Like a Reporter To Avoid Genealogy Mistakes*. This presentation covered how more than two decades of journalism experience has helped Jennifer as a genealogist, both to zero in on reliable information and not to be duped by unreliable information. She described using the “Law and Order” method (follow the “dun duns!”) to track down information. And, she explained how relying on simple principles like Occam’s Razor – that the most likely scenario is the least complicated – and logic grids, can help you get further. We went 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 previously seen and turned over. Jennifer’s handout is on the JGSCV website at: <https://www.jgscv.org/meetings-prior.html>.

Jennifer began her presentation by talking about how she got into genealogy and mentioned her brother, Daniel Mendelsohn and his book *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six*

Allen

Million. Many of us have heard Daniel speak some years ago at an IAJGS conference and have read this excellent book. It his quest to find out what happened to six members of their family in the Shoah. A copy of the book is in the JGSCV permanent library. Daniel is the person in her family that always asked the questions to the older generation, starting at a very early age. Jennifer was not that interested.

As a reporter, Jennifer was used to telling a different type of story. Her expertise was in finding out what was not true in a story—her forte’ was to find the underlying real story. But that changed in 2013. Some of her friends posted about a ‘go-fund-me’ documentary on Facebook for the Streit’s matzoh factory on the lower east side in Manhattan. The factory was on the same street that her mother’s cousin Max sold bagels on: Rivington Street. This intrigued Jennifer. By Googling their names on Rivington Street she got a hit in the 1940 census—the first census that she looked at. As a journalist, she became transfixed to learn the information on the document: where Max was born, where they lived in 1935, his occupation (a baker-- the bagels!), his wife’s name—and it is the wife who is the blood cousin of Jennifer. The clues it gave also led to further research, such as the town where they lived. This inspired her to look up her parents,

grandparents and great-grandparents and cousins in the census. She became hooked and we know what that is like! This is how she was introduced to Ancestry.com!

Her Husband's Grandmother

What happened was serendipitous! Shortly after she started her love affair with genealogy she had a conversation with her husband's 95-year-old grandmother. Frieda was a Holocaust survivor who had lost virtually all of her family on both sides. Jennifer asked her what she knew about America when she was a child in Poland. While Jennifer's family immigrated to America, she assumed her husband's grandmother's family had too. This was not the case except for her mother's two older sisters who had immigrated before World War I and went to Chicago. This was the first Jennifer learned there were relatives in Chicago. Frieda said they lost touch and as she didn't know their last name and she stopped looking for them. This incentivized Jennifer to find her husband's grandmother's family who were descendants of these sisters. As a reporter she believed she could find them.

With only their first names, Jennifer started by using Ancestry.com to find them and while daunting, she was successful! A 1911 ship's manifest led her to this discovery! What she found out was what we are told in genealogy in many cases is not correct. They didn't go to Chicago but Massachusetts. The ship's manifest gives the name and address of the person to whom the emigres were going to meet. Her research found that Frieda's two aunts lived long lives in America. They had children and grandchildren and there were three living first cousins-children of her aunts—albeit they were in their late 80's. As a journalist, Jennifer had the need to write about her research, what she found and reconnecting the family. After her article appeared in *The Tablet* in 2013, she received a call from one of her mother's oldest friends November 2020

asking her for help. This woman's father was adopted—he was born to an unwed Jewish mother in 1928 and asked her to help find his birth mother. With one success under her belt, Jennifer dived in! She approached it as if she was writing a story.

Here Jennifer introduced one of her genealogy tools, logic puzzle grids.

Logic puzzle grid: you get a set of information about certain people and make them all fit into a grid. Example: you know Peter does not live in the green house. Arrange all your information until it fits. In each puzzle you are given a series of categories, and an equal number of options within each category. Each option is used once and only once. Your goal is to figure out which options are linked together based on a series of given clues.

<https://logic.puzzlebaron.com/>

	Jam	Marmalade	Honey	Marmite	21	18	15	12	Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
Peter						X						
Jane							X		X			
Simon						X	X	X				
Alice							X					
Marmite												
Honey												
Marmalade												
Jam												
12												
15												
18												
21												

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reference_desk/Archives/Mathematics/2010_August_23

Using the grid as a tool—plus her research—she found the woman in Brooklyn! She reunited the adoptee with his half-sister.

With two successes she decided to tackle her own family tree. Her brother had done their family tree pre-internet but more information is available more quickly today. Now she was helping others. She found her journalism skills

were the same skills necessary to be a good genealogist:

- Storytelling
- Puzzle solving
- Sleuthing
- Receipts
- Myth-busting
- Knowing who to ask when you don't know

An example she gave was from *People Magazine* and Jackie Onassis's boyfriend Maurice Tempelman. She learned from the seasoned reporter who wrote this story. That reporter gathered information about Tempelman by calling all the African embassies because Mr. Tempelman was in the diamond business and had a lot of business dealings in Africa. From observing this technique, Jennifer learned to relentlessly dig deeper once uncovering "nuggets" of information. This is now how Jennifer approaches her genealogy research.

Jennifer suggested genealogists understand how to use all collateral rings to find the information you are looking for—the target of your research.

A document trail whether it be a vital record, census, ship's manifest all leave clues and it is up to us to use them to lead us to find our target.

What Not to Do

Jennifer gave an example of how people post using tidbits of information that are not necessarily relevant to the target and "assume" that it is correct while adding it to their tree. The example she used was a person named Abraham Cohen married to Bessie Feinberg who owned a deli in Cincinnati. Yes, look for the Cohens with delis in Cincinnati, not the Cohens from Jersey City as someone said they knew someone named Abraham Cohen from Russia now in Jersey City.

Law and Order Method—Follow the Dun Duns!



(<http://www.tv.com/shows/law-order/>)

The show has a prescribed police format that typically begins with a body or other crime scene where they play the *dun-dun* music and the viewer knows there is going to be a change of scene etc. After each new clue, the audience hears the *dun-dun* and is taken to the next piece of information. This is what genealogists need to do – follow the *dun-duns* and follow where the next piece of information for the target takes us.

Every document has *dun-duns*! Jennifer showed an obituary and pointed out the different types of information: date of death, family name of spouse, wife's maiden name, address, relative of the deceased such as parents, children, siblings, etc. Sometimes information is unique—for example why do two brothers have different last names? Did they have different fathers? It's up to the genealogist to figure this out.

Another example shown was a census record and relationship to head of household. Look at all persons in the household. It could be in-laws, borders, etc. Another example is if the age of a child is more than the number of years the parents listed are married. This child may not necessarily be a child of both parents. Is this a second marriage?

A ship's manifest gives the name and address of the person going to in the US as well as the closest relative the person has in the country of origin. Both important clues to follow-up on.

Every address on the manifest is a huge dun-dun, especially for those with common names. There are many Abraham Cohens and David Goldbergs therefore the address helps cull out the incorrect people leaving the correct person. The address is in puzzle grid to help you. Jennifer uses the address to search backwards to see who lived at that address. Jennifer said on Ancestry, address can be used as a “key word” search.

One of Jennifer’s favorite tools is Steve Morse’s site and the ED finder and reverse search for address.

(<https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html>).

The information unfolds with the searches.

What Jennifer Suggests

Using an obituary, she found her grandfather’s brother mentioned someone neither she nor her family had known about. She started her research. The example used was looking for someone named Samuel Gold. She knew his brother and his age and place of birth. Usually siblings are within 20 years of each other and having the birth of one sibling she knows with good confidence-of course there are exceptions- that the unknown brother was born within 20 years of him. Since she knew where the one brother was from, it’s a good chance this other brother was also from the same geographic area. If an obituary mentions the person as the “late XX” then you know he died before the date of the obituary.

Using this information, Jennifer went on her genealogical quest and found him in the 1940 census- correct country of birth etc. but the census provided additional clues: wife, children etc., occupation etc. She found a petition for naturalization which included information on name change. Now she had the original name and where they were from, which port they left from and entered, the name of ship they immigrated on etc... all dun-duns! The manifest’s contact back home provided a

previously unknown name—another dun-dun! Looking further on JRI-Poland she found an index to a marriage record that showed a maiden name of the bride in the Polish town which match the ed to one of the names she was searching. She followed the dun duns and found a person the family was unaware of, and found documents that gave marriage and death dates.

Another suggestion was searching on FamilySearch using* (a wildcard) for spelling assistance.

Jennifer also used her own family tree to show how one document was the key to crack the tree!

Upon researching the information, she had never heard of the town and that resulted in Jennifer searching JewishGen. On the JewishGen FamilyFinder (<https://www.jewishgen.org/jgff/>) she saw others looking for the same town and she reached out to a person searching same name from same town. This does not always work out as they could not find a connection-but is most definitely worth the effort. Jennifer then went to the Latvian archives and found birth records for her grandfather, his brother, her great-grandparents marriage records by working backward which gave her another generation back. When she asked the archives to send all information on this family she was able to find the connection to the woman she found in the Family Finder. No such name of the ship – the actual ship’s name was found elsewhere. Following more dun-duns she found her grandfather had a cousin living in Ohio who she was not previously aware of.

She wanted to know more about this person and placed the illegible document on *Tracing the Tribe* where someone helped her read the name and found the person after going through various spellings of the name. By looking at more documents, from a New York

City marriage certificate she was able to figure out the name change was the problem and he was in actuality her grandfather's cousin. By doing even more newspaper research she found her grandfather's first cousin was in the Jewish major baseball leagues. By following the dun-duns for the uncle she found this exceptional addition to her family tree.

DNA Confirms the Research

Using DNA helped confirm where the research had led Jennifer. She tested her cousin's daughter and compared it to her uncle. The DNA showed they would be second cousins. She also found a granddaughter of another cousin, William Sheer, who also took a DNA test to prove her story that her great grandfather was his brother with a different last name—and the DNA proves that she is a third cousin.

Jennifer was still interested about the witness on naturalization papers for her great-grandfather and William Sheer's. Wondering if he was friend or relative. Jennifer went to research the witness – his naturalization where she learned he was from the same Latvian town as her family, and family tree on Geni proved the witness's mother's maiden name was the same as Jennifer's second great grandmother. The woman she found had taken a DNA test and in comparing them found they are related.

What to Do if You Hit A Dead End?

Is it really a dead end or do you need to search differently? Persistence is a trait Jennifer learned as a reporter which is needed in genealogy. Think creatively on how to get that information. For example, if you can't find someone on the ship's manifest, try different spellings of the name as there are many misspellings or transcription errors on different documents. Using the example of Maurice Tempelman, (see above) someone had dealings with him so it is up to us to find

those people who had dealings with our relatives. An example of misspellings and how Jennifer found who she was looking for—she used the *age* on the manifest to narrow down her search for the person she sought. Any other method would have been unsuccessful.

Wildcard searches can be a great tool for genealogy due to so many misspellings of names. The example, Jennifer used was last name *harkavey* but by using H?, H? with rk*, the * would bring up any set of letters with "rk". For the first name she used Abr* as it could be Abram, Abraham etc. She found several records, each one spelled differently but by using wildcards they came through the search. The ? is for any set of letters.

Some Pitfalls of the Dun-Dun Trail

- Don't rely too much on Ancestry hints—what counts is quality over quantity. The hints are not facts but hints. The hints can lead you off course as they are generated by other people's trees, which are not always accurate.
- Don't assume every record you want is online. Don't assume a record *must* be correct just because you *want* it to be.
- Don't forget commonsense. Remember Occam's Razor- the most likely scenario is the least complicated.
- Don't overthink it- sometimes all it takes is a simple Google search.

"Be a gatekeeper not a vacuum." Be skeptical and don't let any information onto your tree unless you have done the best to confirm that it deserves to be let in.

Remember to use your logic grid. If someone was born in 1912 and you have a death certificate for 1899- even if it's the same name, it's not the same person. If someone's only source on their tree is someone's else's tree,

be very cautious. That is not considered sufficient documentation to prove the event.

Caveat Emptor when using records, Ancestry hints, etc.

Questions and answers: Jennifer was gracious enough to conduct a question and answer period.

To get the information, Jennifer wrote to the Latvian archives and paid for their records and research. Since then she found the records were free on the Internet. The moral of this story: it depends on where you are looking for records. You need to know where the subject of your research was from first to help find the records, therefore don't start your search at JewishGen, as you don't want to start too broad, but do use it when you have the town or other information which helps narrow the search .

When putting in the address in keyword search in Ancestry—put in “exact” for the street name and no personal name— which will bring up city directories. For Steve Morse's reverse search, first, put in the census year you are searching, then the state, city and then put in the exact address. Jennifer showed an example using the 1940 census by putting in state, county and town. Then she looked at the drop-down list of streets in that area...it gave multiple EDs, so she clicked for the map on the website to find where the address is between two streets and put in the cross street on the ED finder. Then go to Ancestry and scroll page by page of ED until you find the address you are looking for.

Suzanne asked what do you do if the street changed its name? In New York City there is a reference entitled, *Old NYC Street Names* which can give different names—there is not a similar resource in other cities. Jennifer suggested to Google the name of the street and it might have the previous name or go to the genealogy group in the city you are looking

to find the street's original name and simply ask if someone knows the previous name of the street. Old maps may help.

A question asked was why people went back to Europe. But, there was not just one reason. Some returned because they didn't like the United States, others found the United States wasn't Religious enough. While not a common occurrence, the return to Europe and the “old country” was not terribly uncommon.

Carrie wanted Jennifer to talk through the Logic Grid. This tool makes information interlock. For example, Mr. Brown does not live in the white house and Mr. Green does not live near Mr. Brown. Now, figure out how they do or don't interact. If you know they weren't in the country in 1900 because you have their birth certificate, that is an information item to make certain you are not looking at the incorrect person—i.e. the 1880 census they would not be listed as they were not here yet. Lock in the information. Is it a probable no, or a possible yes? Be very cautious in the narrative.

A question arose about correctness of spelling names. Genealogy is not “correct” spelling. Jennifer used her mother's maiden name of Yäger, Yaeger, Jager, etc. There was **no right answer**.

A question was asked about what happens when a relative doesn't respond? Jennifer said it's an unfortunate consequence, but some people don't respond to Jennifer either. Even though she tries to get them to answer mentioning old records and photos, some people won't answer. Tammy Hepps from Pittsburgh has a talk on “cousin bait” how to get people to respond. It was suggested to use catnip to bring them in such as, “I have old records, photos”. Regardless, some won't answer. Tammy was a JGSCV guest speaker in 2014.

Another comment was weighing which information is more credible. Use a marriage certificate vs. a death certificate. This is because the person who filled out the marriage certificate is more likely to use correct information rather than a grieving spouse or child who may never have known immigrant grandparents, etc. In the 1940 census an x within a circle tells who provided information.

Jennifer also commented that father' usually didn't know the birthdates of their children.

Closing comments: Be a gatekeeper not a vacuum. Be exacting in your standards.

Even if your mother tells you she loves you- get a second source!

Jennifer Mendelsohn is a seasoned journalist and ghostwriter whose work has appeared in numerous local and national publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, *People*, *Slate* and *USA Today*. A native Long Islander now based in Baltimore, Mendelsohn serves on the board of the JGS of Maryland, is the administrator of Facebook's Jewish genetic genealogy group. A member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, she is the creator of the movement known as #resistancegenealogy, a project that uses genealogical and historical records to fight disinformation and honor America's immigrant past. Her work has received international media attention, including being featured on CNN.com, *The New Yorker* and the *Washington Post*.

New Additions to the JGSCV Libraries

Since we reported in the June 2019's newsletter the following books have been added to the JGSCV library. If you have genealogically relevant books that you would like to donate, please contact Jan Meisels Allen at president@JGSCV.org. The books in the traveling library are categorized A, B, C or D. Those without a letter categorization are in our Permanent Library. The majority of our books are now housed at the Agoura Hills Library, a branch of the Los Angeles County Public Library. A full list of all of our permanent and traveling library holdings may be found on the website: www.jgscv.org.

- *Kinderlager An Oral History of Young Holocaust Survivors* Milton J. Nieuwsma Scholastic Inc. 1998
- *The Number on My Grandfather's Arm* David A. Adler UAHC Press New York, NY
- *Tracing Immigrants through the Pot of New York: Early National Period to 1924* Anne Sibert Buiter New York Genealogical and Biographical Society NY 2020

Venturing Into Our Past" © is the newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley (JGSCV). All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce any original content for non-profit use with prior notification to the editor and proper attribution."

JGSCV Updates

REMINDER: The December 6th meeting includes Chanukah Prizes for paid JGSCV members. Be sure your 2021 dues are either received by mail or hand delivered to Jan Meisels Allen's home – with a prior appointment – by Dec. 4th in order to qualify for the prize drawings. Winners must be present at the meeting. Many of the prizes cost much more than the annual dues.

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>.

There are a number of ballot initiatives on this year's California ballot. JGSCV is not taking any positions on them but Proposition 24 is about privacy and amending the California Consumer Privacy Act and this is something everyone should be interested in. This is a *Los Angeles Times* review of the 12 ballot propositions: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-07-01/propositions-on-california-november-2020-ballot>

JGSCV Welcomes New Members
HARRIETTE HINDERSTEIN
SHULAMIT AND PHILLIP SPAIN



Practicing Safe Computing #60: “Misleading Google Results”

By Hal Bookbinder (Number 60 in a series)



When you search with Google, the first few links shown are often paid ads. Placement below is based on secret and ever-changing criteria. Some sites may suddenly disappear or are pushed down off the top page as Google’s criteria change. Sites pay to be at the top of the list because they know that folks most frequently choose the top one displayed. This can be an expensive mistake.



[AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com) is a free service that permits you to view your credit reports from Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. By law, these agencies are required to

allow one free annual download of your credit report. Recently all three agreed to permit one download each week through April 2021.

Being able to obtain your Credit report for free pretty much as often as you would like is great – even if this may be a marketing ploy to get folks hooked on frequent access. In preparing to share this, I typed “AnnualCreditReport” into Google. The first three items returned were entitled:

1. “Annual Credit Report - Official Credit Report” and linked to [freescoreonline.com](https://www.freescoreonline.com),
2. “Annual Credit Report - 3 Bureau Credit Report” and linked to [freescoreonline.com](https://www.freescoreonline.com)
3. “Annual Credit Report.com - Home Page” and linked to [AnnualCreditReport.com](https://www.annualcreditreport.com)

The first two take you to the same commercial site that requires your credit card and will start charging a monthly fee of \$29.95 if you do not cancel within the 7-day free trial period. While they are labeled as “Ads”, they expect that many will not pay attention. Some will then decide to purchase their services or accept the free trial and neglect to cancel in time to avoid being charged.



To pay a bill from QuestDiagnostics I searched for “QuestDiagnostics bill”. The top site displayed was, “QuestDiagnostics.com Bill - Pay Bill Online” and linked to a page within [doxo.com](https://www.doxo.com) that looked very much like a QuestDiagnostics payment page. doxo.com is

a legitimate third-party payer that is not associated with QuestDiagnostics.

The actual QuestDiagnostics site, [questdiagnostics.com](https://www.questdiagnostics.com), is the second one listed. It would be easy to mistake the first site as the official one. In checking out the doxo site I found that they would add \$3.99 to my bill as a service fee and take three days to process my credit card payment. I paid the bill at the actual QuestDiagnostics site where payment was immediate and there was no service fee.

doxo has been sued for trademark infringement for deceptively appearing to be the company’s official payment site. Customers would then complain to the companies about the service fees. doxo displays advisories that they are a third-party payment site. But folks often do not pay attention.

Take care when selecting a link from among those returned by Google. Be certain that it is the site you actually want. In considering a third-party payer site be sure to review its terms and conditions to be sure it is your best option - it certainly was not for me! It is easy to make an expensive mistake.

This is the sixtieth in a series of articles by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAJGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAJGS 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

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.

This month, we commemorate the end of WWII by looking at the importance of entertaining the troops.

The following content is reprinted in its entirety with permission of the author, Catherine Knight

The Significance of Entertainment in WWII

Some have said that troop entertainment was vital to win the war. Although the entertainment did not participate in the actual on-the-front fighting of the war, it participated significantly in other non-violent ways. With music, comedy, and the beautiful looks of pin-up girls' pictures, the entertainment served as a way of reminding the troops what they were fighting for: home, safety, and freedom.

Having a sense of home was very important to the servicemen in WWII. The soldiers longed for home while they were abroad, and the performers that were brought in by the United Service Organizations (U.S.O.) to entertain them knew that this was so. To them, home represented a place of safety, comfort, and warmth with loved ones, things which were not at all associated with the military, let alone with war. As Bob Hope recognized, "The reason for our overwhelming welcome from troops all over the world...was that we spelled, more than anything else, 'home'. Hope was dedicated to bringing smiles to the troops' faces and laughter into their lives with his humor; he made life that much more bearable for the servicemen while they were at war abroad by bringing them this sense of home with his jokes, as well as with his very presence. Betty Grable sought to give soldiers this sense of home by autographing pictures of herself and sending them to the servicemen. She also replied to all the letters they sent her to try to bring the troops as much happiness and comfort while they were away from home as she could. These same sentiments were also felt & sent by the women and families of the servicemen that the servicemen loved (and surely greatly missed). Glenn Miller, too, acknowledged that the troops needed this sense of home. In 1944, Miller wrote from England to George Simon saying, "We didn't come here to set any fashions in music. We merely came to bring a much-needed touch of home to some lads who have been here a couple of years". All of the entertainers gave willingly and generously of themselves to entertain the troops in patriotic spirit, even if it sometimes meant being in the line of potential danger.

Glenn Miller recognized the importance of the entertainment he supplied. The music he played not only gave the soldiers a reprieve from the terrors of war, but it also served to boost the morale of the troops while they were fighting. With his catchy instrumental tunes and sweet slow ballads, as well as with the lyrics of songs that accompanying singers sang, Miller provided a distraction for the soldiers from the war that was being waged around them. The faster songs distracted troops with their catchy beats, and the ballads reminded the men of their loved ones at home, as the lyrics below demonstrate from the song "Moonlight Serenade" by Glenn Miller (lyrics by Mitchell Parish):

*"I stand at your gate and the song that I sing is of moonlight
I stand and I wait for the touch of your hand in the June night
The roses are sighing a moonlight serenade.*

*The stars are a glow and tonight how their light sets me dreaming
My love, do you know that your eyes are like stars brightly beaming?
I bring you and sing you a moonlight serenade.*

*Just you and I, a summer sky, a heavenly breeze kissing the trees
So don't let me wait come to me tenderly in the June night
I stand at your gate and I sing you a song in the moonlight
A love song, my darling, a moonlight serenade
We can stay, till break of day").*

To hear the "Moonlight Serenade" instrumentals only performed click here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQseFACWvtE>

To hear "Moonlight Serenade" performed with vocals go here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uIDfQaWW9o>



Bob Hope

"First in the Hearts of the Servicemen"

Born Leslie Townes Hope in a London suburb in May 1903, Bob Hope was not originally a US citizen (he became one in 1920). He came to Cleveland, Ohio, with his family when he was four years old. In 1929, he changed his name to Bob because the nickname for Leslie was "Les" and the name "Les Hope" didn't seem too inspiring or encouraging (7). Hope became a successful vaudeville star in the early 1920's, well-trained to "carry a tune, tell jokes, ad lib, read lines and contort his handsome rubbery face into a broad array of clownish responses. He was a natural who, before long, triumphed on Broadway and radio" (6). He went on to be not only on Broadway and on the radio, but also on television and in multiple movies. Hope's most significant accomplishment and the one that touched the most people was his tremendous ability to entertain troops in WWII.



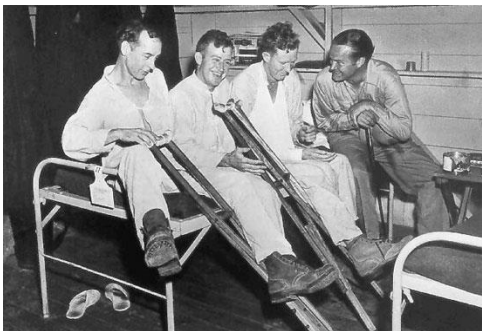
With his wit and fast humor, Hope was able to make soldiers laugh and lift their spirits with his jokes and monologues, a true gift which was starkly contrasted by the feelings that servicemen otherwise experienced while at war: fear, homesickness, and depression, just to name a few. Hope broadcasted a total of 144 radio shows during the war, the majority of which were from military bases. Hope would identify the base right away, opening his monologue with "This is Bob (insert location here) Hope."

"It didn't take Hope long to figure out how to win an audience of troops. 'The essential element of foxhole humor, in Hope's view, is that the GI laughed hardest when the joke was on him....' In Hope's words, '[The GI] can take it. He's laughing off the icy cold, the searing heat, the bugs and the scorpions, his fears and his frustrations.' He also believed that the GI's real enemies, even after war broke out, were never just the Germans or the Japanese. The enemies were boredom, mud, officers, and abstinence. Any joke that touched those nerves was a sure thing".

"The most wonderful thing about England right now is Bob Hope... He is tireless and funny, and full of responsibility, too, although he carries it lightly and gaily. There isn't a hospital ward that he hasn't dropped into and given a show; there isn't a small unit anywhere that isn't either talking about his jokes or anticipating them. What a gift laughter is!"

-Actor Burgess Meredith, summer 1943

Hope never enlisted in the army. Because of this, at the time some questioned Hope's courage and went so far as to suggest that he was performing for troops so that he could stay out of the army. However, Hope was extremely hard-working and "...he brought succor to the soldiers in the dirt and consoled countless families of those who didn't make it back...he didn't limit himself to training camps and safe territories, but inched as close to the front as he was allowed, never giving himself or his staff a break" (6).



Even after his involvement in WWII, he continued to entertain troops in the wars following it. His first performance for the troops was May 6, 1941, six months before Pearl Harbor, and his last in 1990 was right before the Persian Gulf War at the age of 90 (8). In 1997, the United Service Organizations (U.S.O.) successfully worked with Congress to designate Bob Hope the first and only Honorary Veteran of the United States Armed Forces; Hope passed away in 2003.

Grable **"The Girl With The Million Dollar Legs"**

Betty Grable was well known for her beauty and was widely popular in the 1940's as a pin-up girl. Although she was not the first pin-up girl (that was Dorothy Lamour), Grable's popularity soon overtook Lamour's, especially with her famous 1943 image (the image of her in a bathing suit looking back over her shoulder, in the center-right of the collage below).

Grable was born in 1916 in St. Louis, Missouri. Her mother strongly encouraged her to start dancing and get into vaudeville at an early age. In 1929, Grable and her mother moved to Hollywood where Grable soon became involved in



multiple movies, rising to official stardom in 1939. She eventually became the No. 1 female box office attraction in 1942, 1943, 1944 and remained in the Top 10 for the next decade.



"In 1942... 'World War II was raging around the globe and escapist films were being manufactured in Hollywood as quickly as possible. Betty's ingratiating freshness and beauty appealed strongly to the American G.I.s stationed overseas and her films were eagerly requested by the lonely servicemen. Although she never toured outside the United States for the U.S.O., Betty actively participated in War efforts, appearing at Camps across the country and at Bond Rallies (sic) where she auctioned off her nylons for thousands of dollars. Volunteering at the Hollywood Canteen, a club for servicemen staffed entirely by film stars and studio workers, she 'Jitterbugged' the night away with hundreds of soldiers, sailors and marines....' Her fan mail often reached 10,000 letters per week, and in 1942 she sent 54,000 autographed photos to the soldiers at Camp Robinson, Arkansas, who had sent her 54,000 letters. She...married the bandleader Harry James [on] July 5, 1943. A popular GI slogan during the war became 'I want a girl just like the girl that married Harry James'".

The pin-ups of WWII were out in the open and sanctioned by the government; photos were allowed to decorate airplane cockpits and army barracks. *Life* magazine had coined the term "pin-up" [a (usually female) model whose mass-produced pictures see wide appeal as pop culture] in the July 7, 1941 issue, and the name stuck.

According to Doug Warren, "About 5 million copies of the famous pose were in GI hands during the war, and the over-the-shoulder pose was the only one that was used for this purpose. It is believed that the term 'pin-up' was truly born with this Betty Grable photo. Betty was a representation of the girl-back-home for thousands of homesick young lads. For some, she may have been their only infatuation, the last girl they had ever lusted for, loved, or adored. She was company on a cold night, comfort at times of pain. Betty had an idea that she was admired by the GIs but had no way of knowing exactly how much. It was more than the sexy picture that enamored them of her; there was a magical wholesomeness and substance they saw beyond the curves of her figures. It was her very essence that was loved".

The girl's picture on the side of this plane (with the name "Go Gettin' Gal") well exemplifies how much women, and especially pretty women, were thought about and cherished by servicemen during the war .Grable's contract with Fox ended in 1953, just as Marilyn Monroe was rising in popularity. In the 50's, Betty moved to Las Vegas and made appearances on television and in nightclubs, and on stage in the early 60s. She divorced Harry James in 1965. Betty Grable continued working on tours and stage shows, and doing TV commercials until her death from cancer in 1973.



Click [here](#) to watch a video about WWII troops & their pinup girls; it also involves part of an episode of Bob Hope's show and its trademark song, "Thanks for the Memory."

Click [here](#) to watch a video of Betty Grable in "I'll Be Marching to a Love Song" from a scene from "The All-Star Bond Rally" (1945).

Genealogy Odds and Ends

The MyHeritage mobile app makes it easier to access and navigate through. Here are resources to help learn and understand how to benefit from some of its tools:

- Using your mobile device for genealogy: <https://tinyurl.com/yxr2y8ao>
- How to scan old family photos: <https://tinyurl.com/yx8muk9f>
- MyHeritage mobile app exclusives: <https://tinyurl.com/yxcfjoao>

FamilySearch expanded its free online archives in September of 2020 with over 29 million new indexed family history records and over 66,000 digital images from all over the world. New historical records were added from Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, England, Fiji, France, Germany, Honduras, Italy, Kiribati, Luxembourg, Mexico, Micronesia, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Puerto Rico, Samoa, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Venezuela, Zambia, and the United States, which includes Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Ohio, Utah, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. Search records here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxkoe3y7>

JewishGen announced an upgrade to the Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP), enabling the addition of **555** new family trees, representing **454,416** individuals. In total, the Family Tree of the Jewish People now includes **7,684** trees which represent approximately **8,642,345** individuals. FTJP is unique in that it contains ONLY Jewish family history data. The FTJP can be searched by visiting <https://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/ftjp.asp>. To submit a Family Tree, go here: <https://www.jewishgen.org/gedcom/>

A study completed by 23andMe reports on the response to health information provided by genetic testing. As reported in the journal *Molecular Genetics & Genomic Medicine*, study participants found value in this data and that it led to further health conversations with their family. See the 23andMe report here: <https://blog.23andme.com/23andme-research/response-to-genetic-testing/>.

The Rotterdam City Archives, Netherlands, *Gemeentearchief te Rotterdam*, digitized and indexed the Holland-America Line Passenger Lists 1900-1974 from the lines' archives (Passenger lists from 3 May 1900 through 14 October 1974). This includes the departure records from New York. Crowd-sourced indexing is still ongoing. Both Rotterdam City Archives and WieWasWie joined forces on the crowdsourcing platform VeleHanden to make the records more accessible. "Between 1880 and 1920 about one million Eastern Europeans moved to America via Rotterdam. See: <https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/over-ons/projecten/passagierslijsten-hal/> To search go to: <https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/zoek-en-ontdek/passagierslijsten/>

Kristallnacht: Night of Broken Glass 82nd Anniversary November 9-10

This year marks the 82^d 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. Jews were terrorized throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia that were occupied by German troops. At least 91 Jews were killed in the attacks, and 30,000 were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps. Jewish homes, hospitals, and schools were ransacked. The attackers demolished buildings with sledgehammers. Over 1,000 synagogues were burned (95 in Vienna alone) and over 7,000 Jewish businesses destroyed or damaged.

According to the Free Dictionary, Herschel Grynszpan a 17-year-old Jew, assassinated the third secretary at the German embassy in Paris on November 7, 1938, to avenge the expulsion of his parents and 15,000 other

Polish Jews to German concentration camps. This gave the Nazis the excuse they were waiting for and Goebbels urged Storm Troopers to stage violent reprisals--which resulted in Kristallnacht.

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

While this talk on Kristallnacht is from 2018, I know the speaker, Hanne Liebmann, since I was in 8th grade as her daughter and I have been friends since then. This is her story about being a child when Kristallnacht occurred in Germany. Hanne talks for the first 35 minutes- the rest of the program others discussed the Shoah. See: <https://tinyurl.com/yxs2nblj>

To read more about Kristallnacht see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kristallnacht> <https://tinyurl.com/ybhwfeu4> for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum write up.

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



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

Children Can't be Born Before Their Parents: A common-sense guide for genealogical beginners

Reprinted with permission granted by the author Jennifer Mendelsohn, JGSCV's October speaker. This content originally appeared in MyHeritage Blog Dec. 20, 2017 <https://blog.myheritage.com/2017/12/children-cant-be-born-before-their-parents-a-common-sense-guide-for-genealogical-beginners/>

To say that the availability of online records has revolutionized genealogy would be an understatement. It wasn't that long ago that it could take months or even years to pull together the kind of information you can now find over a leisurely afternoon spent browsing online, sipping coffee at your desk. Census records, birth certificates, photographs, naturalizations — so much is available, sometimes literally at the click of a key.

But that easy access is not without its downside. For new genealogists, going online for the first time can be like visiting a sumptuous buffet table, brimming with tantalizing delicacies. The good news is that there's so much good stuff. The bad news is that it's easy to overfill your plate and end up feeling sick. It's almost — dare I say it? — as if online access has made it too easy. When there wasn't that much information readily available — when you had to actually go to an archive or library to find things — there were fewer opportunities to fill your tree with bad information. These days, there is so much available that it's extraordinarily tempting to vacuum up every record and Smart Match offered online and attach it to your tree. Poof! You've taken your tree all the way back to Adam and Eve!

If only it were that easy.

A big tree with thousands of people may seem impressive on the surface, but when the tree is filled with unreliable information, and with people who are not actually related to you, it really doesn't matter how big it is.

So how can you fill your tree with *good* information?

Professional genealogists actually have clear standards for how they conduct research. The professional bible known as *Genealogy Standards*, published by the [Board for Certification of Genealogists](#), lays out a five-point protocol known as the Genealogical Proof Standard. And, while it might be unrealistic to expect that every casual user working on an online family tree can be held to that professional standard, especially when they're just getting started, it's worth looking at what the Genealogical Proof Standard entails and how beginners can learn from it.

1. Conduct a reasonably exhaustive search:

This means you must exhaust — within reason — all possibilities to find the information you're looking for, which also means familiarizing yourself with what records are available and where to find them. For the MyHeritage beginner, it's important to understand that while [MyHeritage has literally billions](#)

[and billions of records](#), and you are almost certain to find some of what you're looking for, *not every document you need will be online*.

People often mistakenly assume that everything they need is going to pop up when they hit "search all records," which leads them to make mistakes: If a search returns a record that seems like it *could* be the one they want, they assume it *must* be because they're not aware that the correct one is simply not indexed or available online.

If you're searching for a [birth certificate](#) for your great-grandfather John Williams, who you think may have been born in New York City in 1907, you can't simply accept that the first birth certificate you see with that name and year is the correct one. Because there might have been three – or 13! or 30! – John Williams born in New York City that year. What specific information – Parents' names? Parents' place of birth? Address? Birthdate? – matches previously confirmed information about *your* John Williams and suggests that a specific record should be added to your tree?

2. Use complete and accurate source citations:

Simply, you should indicate where your information came from, and use credible sources. Anyone looking at your tree should be able to replicate your search, and find the same information from the same source that you did.

For beginners, it's crucial to remember that other users' trees do not necessarily count as credible sources. Newbies tend to get a little over-eager about confirming Smart Matches to other people's trees. Perhaps that person has already done the heavy lifting of sketching out some distant branches of your family. By confirming, all those new people will be automatically grafted into your tree, which can be gratifying. But doing so sometimes means you are unwittingly importing and embedding many errors in the process.

Remember that trees are only as good as their creators. Some are worth copying and some are definitely not. Evaluate how good the information in the other user's tree is – Is it well-sourced? Is it logical? Does the creator have a legitimate connection to the family in question? - before grafting it onto your own.

3. Perform a thorough analysis and prove correlation:

Here's where you look at the information you've found and interpret it. How good are the sources you have? How reliable is the information they contain? How was that information obtained and from whom? What next steps for research or conclusions has it led you to?

If you're using information from a [death certificate](#), for instance, think about who completed it. A spouse may be a more reliable source for the name of her late partner's parents – whom she may have actually known – than a child born after they died. A death certificate completed by the undertaker is less reliable than one filled out by a family member. And the information on a death certificate, often filled out under duress by grief-stricken family members, is generally less likely to be reliable than the information on a birth certificate.

4. Resolve conflicting information:

A tough one, but we all encounter information that doesn't jive: In one census, your great-great-grandfather was said to have been [born in Switzerland](#) in 1835; in the next, he says he was born in New York City in 1838. You have to think through the steps you've taken to decide which one is more correct than the other – maybe it's a preponderance of evidence suggesting he was Swiss, including, for example, a [naturalization document](#) showing an address you have confirmed was his. You can't make a credible conclusion if you haven't resolved these conflicts.

5. Include a soundly reasoned and coherently written conclusion:

What's the upshot of all you've found? How did you get from all the pieces of evidence to the conclusions you have made? Professional genealogists tie it all together. Taking the step of documenting your reasoning eliminates the chance that you're simply rubber-stamping a preconceived notion, or that you haven't fully considered all of the evidence.

Does the GPS seem daunting? Are your eyes glazing over? That's OK.

Even if you're not a professional genealogist and have no plans to become one, one simple thing you can do while working on your tree is to use what might be called the Common Sense Standard: When analyzing records, be especially skeptical about adding seemingly implausible information to your tree. Families, for the most part, typically follow common sense arcs. So should your tree. Sure, sometimes families have extraordinary circumstances, but that's the exception, not the rule.

There's a principle used in science called [Occam's Razor](#) that says the most likely explanation for something is the simplest and least complicated. I like to practice something I call "Occam's Razor Genealogy:" When evaluating genealogical options, you need to remember that often the least convoluted answer is the correct one. That means you should pay attention to basic chronology and geography, which really shouldn't be difficult.

I can't believe I have to say this, but having looked at many trees over the years, here goes: Children can't be born before their parents. And you can't emigrate to a new country before you're born or serve in the military after you die. I know, I know, it's crazy, right? But before you add Mary Farnsworth (born 1788) and Josiah William Elliott (born 1785) as the parents of Josiah William Elliott Jr. (born 1777), stop and take a moment. It's just not possible.

Similarly, remember the limitations of human biology. A man can't father a child when he's 10 years old. A mother can't be 90 when she gives birth, Bible stories notwithstanding. Full siblings can't be four months apart. Sure, people move around, but they don't typically have children born on three different continents in three years. If Jacob and Ida Rosenstein had children born in Zhitomir, Ukraine in 1891, 1893 and 1897 and 1899, you should be skeptical of the idea that their son Hyman was born in 1896 in Argentina, and you definitely should not include that fact in your tree unless you have ironclad evidence. And, if a preponderance of evidence suggests someone's year of birth is 1910 or 1911, it's highly unlikely that a death certificate for someone born in 1927 is the same person, so think

long and hard before you attach it to your tree. Sounds silly, right? But you'd be amazed how many times I have seen trees with exactly these kinds of glaring errors.

The great news for beginners is that [MyHeritage](#) has a built-in feature called the [Consistency Checker](#) that can eliminate many common sense errors almost effortlessly. Access the Consistency Checker from the drop-down menu under "Family Tree" on the MyHeritage home page. It will automatically flag exactly these kinds of errors – wives who are 70 years younger than their husbands, people living to 130, or parents born after children – and can sometimes fix them with as little as one click.

So the next time you sit down to work on your tree, try to change your mindset. Instead of being an information vacuum, sucking up every record in your path with abandon, think of yourself as an information gatekeeper: Be skeptical, and don't let any information through that gate and into your tree until you've done your best to confirm that it deserves to be let in.

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates through December 2021



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

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, November 1st 1:30-3:30PM via Zoom
 Marlis Glaser Humphrey will explain how the DoJR Project will answer the question: "What records are available for my town?"

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

2020	DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
	Dec. 6	Genie Milgrom	Following in the Footsteps and Remnants of the Crypto Jews"
	Jan. 3	Jarrett Ross	1.The Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam 2.DNA and Criminals
	Feb. 14	Marian Smith	Researching USCIS Records
	Mar. 7	Amy Wachs	Food of Eastern Europe Family
	Apr. 10	TBA	Yom Hashoah Program
	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

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.)

