

# VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



# JGSCV

August 2023

Volume 18 Issue 11

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We hope this finds you well and safe and that the scorching weather has not been too difficult to manage.

We are not meeting in August. I hope everyone enjoys the month off from JGSCV meetings while continuing work with their family history.

The IAJGS Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy is meeting this week (July 30-August 3) in London, England. To my knowledge, at least two of our members are attending: JGSCV board member and librarian, Issie Perel, and founding member Hal Bookbinder.

Note: The IAJGS 2024 Annual Conference will be held in Philadelphia, PA 2024, August 18 – 22. And, for those who like to really plan - the 2025 conference will be held August 10-14, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This is the home of the Genealogy Center at the Allen County Public Library.

I am sorry I missed the July meeting, but family health issues took precedence. Thank you to those who gave presentations, and thanks to Debby Wenkart for writing up a summary which is on page 3.

It's that time of year when we appoint a Nominations Committee for the board. Sonia Hoffman has agreed to chair the Nominations Committee. The Board is in the process of appointing a board member and member from the general membership. The following board members terms are finishing terms at the end of this year: Warren Blatt, Barbara Finsten, Andrea Massion, and Israel "Issie" Perel. All were elected in December 2021 and started serving January 2022 for 2-years. They are welcome to apply to the Nominations Committee for consideration for the new slate. Our by-laws permit no less than six and up to 12 members of the board. Currently we are at 7 board members. Sonia and the committee will contact those JGSCV members in good standing who are eligible to be considered for the board. The Nominations form is on the website and may be found at: [https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/board\\_application\\_form.pdf](https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/board_application_form.pdf) Please submit the form by September 12, 2023 to [Sonia@jgscv.org](mailto:Sonia@jgscv.org).

The New Jersey State Library is hosting an informative webinar titled, "Diving Deep into Genetic Genealogy." It is on August 2 via Zoom **9:00AM-10:30AM PDT (12:00 pm to 1:30 pm EDT)**. The webinar is open to the public, and attendance is free; however, participants are required to register in advance through this link: <https://tinyurl.com/37fe9522>). Once registered, attendees can log in on the day of the event and embark on an enlightening journey into their ancestral past. The host, Melissa Johnson, is a Certified Genealogist, and will dive into more than the basics about DNA testing and how it can be useful to supplement the traditional paper trail for genealogical research. You will discover more about using the testing companies' websites to analyze and compare test results, how to use third party tools for analysis, and how to develop targeted testing plans to solve genealogical problems and brick walls.

(Cont'd next page)

## NEXT MEETING

### NO MEETING IN AUGUST

### *IAJGS CONFERENCE IN LONDON*

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

*"Researching an American Family using Many Sources"*

*See Page 7*

## [WWW.JGSCV.ORG](http://WWW.JGSCV.ORG)

6052 Hackers Lane  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301  
[818-889-6616](tel:818-889-6616)

### 2023 JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in collaboration with the Office of Army Cemeteries, has made a significant addition to the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM) website (<https://www.vlm.cem.va.gov/>).

This digital platform, dedicated to honoring Veterans interred in various military cemeteries, now includes 300,000 service members and Veterans from 27 Department of Defense-managed military cemeteries. Each of these individuals will have their own personalized page on the VLM website, where friends, family, and others can pay tribute, share photos, and provide information about their achievements and life stories. This expansion brings the total number of memorialized Veterans on the VLM site to over 4.5 million.

Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, Matt Quinn expressed the importance of the Veterans Legacy Memorial, highlighting how it provides an opportunity to remember and express gratitude for the service and contributions of Veterans, even when physical visits to gravesites may not be feasible.

23andMe has published an article entitled "*Understanding Ashkenazi Jewish Ancestry & Genetics for Your Health*." It may be accessed at: <https://tinyurl.com/5edzxd7>.

Seasoned Jewish genealogists you may be aware of what's in the Family History Zone article on *The Fascinating History of Jewish Genealogy* but those newer to Jewish Genealogy may find it helpful. This is a free guide that may be downloaded and the link is included in the article. See: <https://familyhistory.zone/the-fascinating-history-of-jewish-genealogy/> (Note there are advertisements included within the website.)

Dick Eastman in his *Online Genealogy Newsletter* has an article on forensic genetic genealogy searches which is of interest to all genealogists regarding a person's entire genetic makeup. You may read the letter at: <https://www.eogn.com/page-18080/13233067>

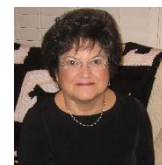
Federal legislation has been introduced, *Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People* to save millions of federal dollars by curbing erroneous payments to individuals who have died. This legislation would curb erroneous government payments to deceased individuals for a temporary three-year period and would make the temporary provisions permanent. The *Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act* would amend the Social Security Act to allow the Social Security Administration to share the Death Master File—a record of deceased individuals—with the Treasury Department's Do Not Pay system on a permanent basis. This change would reign in the government's pattern of making improper payments to deceased people into the future.

The bill would also allow Treasury's Do Not Pay working system to compare death information from the Social Security Administration with personal information from other entities and to share this information with any paying or administering agency authorized to use the Do Not Pay system. Read more at: <https://tinyurl.com/2xy32zsd>.

Hal Bookbinder continues with the 93<sup>rd</sup> installment of his "*Practicing Safe Computing*" series with *Ten Commandments to avoid AI scams*. See page 5.

Looking forward to seeing you on September 10 when JGSV Vice President, Membership, Helene Rosen will be talking on *Researching an American Family using Many Sources*.

*Jan Meisels Allen*



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# Highlights from: “Genealogy in the Round”

Submitted by Debby Wenkart, JGSCV Board Secretary

We had 3 presenters who spoke at the Annual Genealogy in the Round meeting on July 9, 2023.

## Debby Wenkart

Debby spoke about a recent “brick wall” that fell due to the release of the 1938 Emigration Records from Vienna.

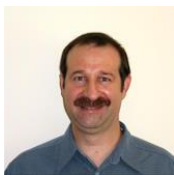
Debby had a photograph of three sisters, one was her father’s mother and her two sisters. But she couldn’t find any information about her grandmother’s two sisters because she only knew their first names and not their surnames.

In 1938, every Jewish resident/head of household of Vienna was required to fill out a form which provided a wealth of information including nationality, where they were born, where they planned to emigrate to, relatives abroad, visas obtained etc.



Drawings by Klara,  
Fela’s daughter, Age 7 in 1939  
Hidden by Teacher, found in 2015!

In 2022, Vienna released these records to the National Library of Israel which worked with MyHeritage to digitize and partially translate the records. Debby was able to learn the names of her two great aunts and their fate. With the surname for Great Aunt Fela identified, she was able to research her story with the help of the Arolsen Archives, a Yad Vashem’s Page of Testimony submitted by her husband and JewishGen. Several drawings by Great Aunt Fela’s 7-year-old daughter were found at USHMM (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC). The teacher hid the drawings during the war, and they were found by a Belgium dealer in 2015. The youngest sister, Rosa, was also identified. The three sisters’ names and their children are inscribed in Vienna on the Memorial Wall of Names which was dedicated in 2021 to remember the 65,000 Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

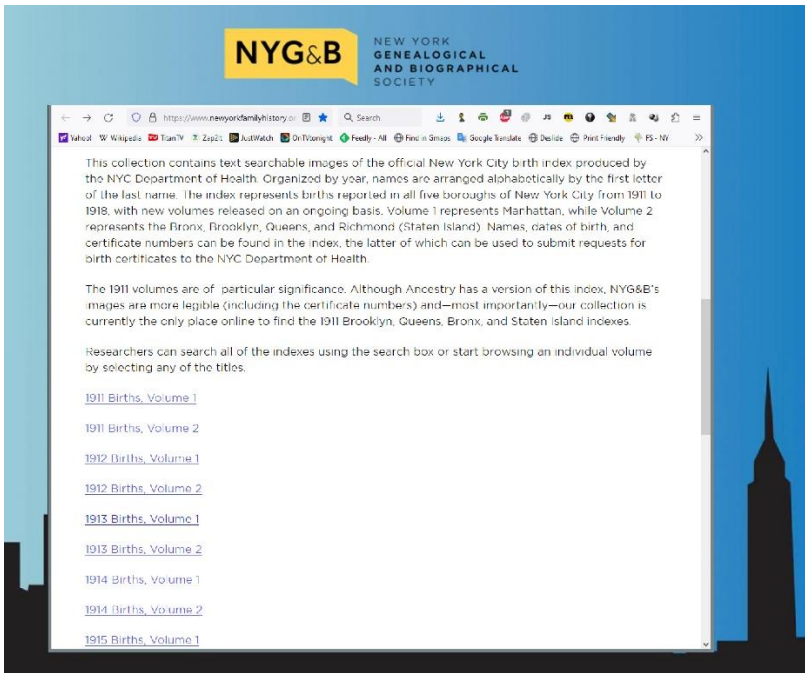
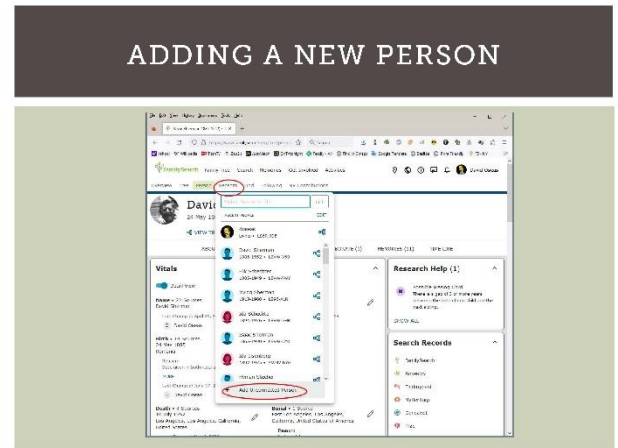


## David Oseas

David shared his Secrets for FamilySearch (FS) research:

1. In Search Form, Less is more  
— less information may provide better results, for examples countries changed, some fields aren’t indexed
2. Example of Non-indexed field
3. FamilySearch Identity Numbers (IDs)

4. How to add a new person to the shared tree — click on anyone in the tree to add someone new
5. Source citation
6. Catalogue search — always use the keyword search, it's always the most current
7. Place search vs. keyword search
8. Image status — view the original document, check for image availability, etc.
9. Image navigation by image number; "items" in a film roll
10. **Bonus tip** (non-FS): NYG&B has posted new NYC Birth Indexes, 1911-1918



David's presentation slides will be available on the JGSCV website (<https://jgscv.org/>) under Past Meetings

## Marion Werle

Marion wanted to share the importance of context when researching our ancestor's stories. Recently, she tackled writing about her grandmother, a topic she'd found challenging. Her grandmother had lived with Marion when she was growing up and she carried memories of her from a child's perspective. She decided to focus research on her grandmother's life before she was born.

One of the stories Marion had heard was that her mother had to leave school a year early to support her mother (Marion's grandmother). It always struck Marion as unfair that her grandmother didn't work; she had worked in a sweatshop in NYC for a few years before coming to Canada and was a dressmaker there before she married.

While working on Grandma's bio, she realized that her grandfather's employment in Montreal was sketchy before he moved back to Saskatchewan. She sent for her grandmother's 1940 Canadian residence record which showed that she was 55 years old and had been a housewife for years, and the only skill she listed was "light cooking." It finally dawned on Marion that she hadn't considered the context of the times. Unlike Marion's mother, who had office and bookkeeping skills, her grandmother only had a primary school education and no marketable skills. It was also during the Depression, and her grandmother would have been competing with younger people for scarce jobs.

Marion's perspective on a family story shifted as she recognized the challenges her grandmother had faced. She realized that she must understand of the context of her ancestor's lives before judging how they lived.

# Practicing Safe Computing Article #93: “Ten Commandments to avoid AI scams”

By Hal Bookbinder



## Thou shalt not

- י Succumb to pressure to act now.
- ך Share personal data when contacted.
- ס Pursue unsolicited opportunities.
- ט Download unverified AI utilities.
- ף Try to outsmart AI.

## Thou shalt

- א Keep up with the news.
- ב Limit sharing in social media.
- ג Remain aware, remain vigilant.
- ד Independently verify before acting.
- ה Trust your gut.

While I believe that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will provide amazing advances in science, medicine, analytics, and productivity, and prove a boon for humankind, it will also be disruptive. Significant effort will be required to limit its potential for harm. While the Government is now scrambling to catch up, reviewing the Federal Register shows [numerous studies](#) on the benefits and challenges of AI.

My May article, [Artificial Intelligence](#), discussed the use of AI to make the existing grandparent scam more believable and more dangerous. I also noted that with AI, some of the easy clues in scam emails and texts, will become a thing of the past. While we do not yet fully know how AI may be used to perpetuate scams, some of the ways can be readily imagined.

There is a vast amount of personal information that is available on the Internet, including entries in public and semi-private databases. Using this data, AI will be able to better guess the passwords we use (few of us use truly random ones) and to personalize scams. It will be able to fashion communication that is so knowledgeable about each of us that we are more likely to believe in its legitimacy.

By scanning the Internet, including our postings on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, AI may learn that we are avid genealogists, are in job search mode, have suffered a loss, are ready to invest, are preparing to retire, or are on vacation in Europe. While scams today find and use this information, it can be costly and time consuming. AI can gather, analyze, organize, and use such information on an industrial scale.

AI might reach out to us as a distant relative trying to connect or a genealogical database offering new finds. It might offer an opportunity that is exactly what interests us right now. It could seemingly come from our specific bank, brokerage, grocery, utility, or doctor. It might even include specific knowledge about our accounts or medical history, and even ask about our spouse or children by name.

AI may be able to contact us in a way that shows knowledge that could only be coming from a relative or friend. Contact may be by email, text, or phone. Similarly, it might assume your identity and attempt to scam family and friends. You might first learn of this when someone reaches out to you asking how you could recommend this worthless stock to them, or otherwise set them up.

Folks have been fooled into downloading free, or low-cost, AI tools, only to be infected with a virus or sustain a ransom attack. Be sure to regularly scan your system for viruses. Trust that cyber criminals will keep pushing the envelope and coming up with new AI-driven scams. While there will likely be controls put in place, in the end, you need to primarily rely on yourself to avoid being scammed.

*This is the ninety-third 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 <https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>.*

# JGSCV Updates

## Community Contribution Program

Whether you are a friend or member we appreciate your support and hope you will sign up for Ralphs and Food-for-Less community programs.

These programs give donations to JGSCV when you shop.

For more information and signing up go to JGSCV's website under Noteworthy <https://jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>.



## Family Histories: Call for Entries

In July 2020, our speaker, Joan Adler, suggested members write down family memories and/or genealogical discoveries. We've published fascinating and personal family histories and would love to include more of these stories in this newsletter.

For ideas and assistance, please contact our newsletter editor, [Diane Goldin](mailto:Diane.Goldin) and Jan Meisels Allen at [president@jgscv.org](mailto:president@jgscv.org).

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

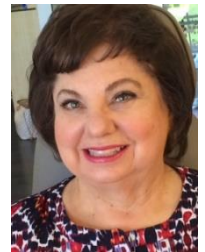
**will hold an In-Person meeting at**  
**Temple Adat Elohim, 2420 E. Hillcrest Drive in Thousand Oaks**

**Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:30-4:30 p.m.**  
**Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner begins at 2:10 PM**

**NOTE THE NEW MEETING TIME**



**SEPTEMBER PROGRAM**  
***“Researching an American Family  
using Many Sources”***



*Helene Rosen*

**The Program:**

This presentation concentrates on Helene Rosen’s research on the Texas branch of her third great-grandmother Sprinze Seelig Badt’s tree as the family grew roots in America. The family put down roots in LaGrange, TX and became pillars of the community. From their participation in the Civil War to their successful grocery business to those who still remember piano lessons in their large family home, the family continues to fascinate. With new surprises found at every turn, the focus is not on their large family tree but the use of many different sources to learn more about their colorful lives as they became an all American family.

**The Speaker:**

Helene Rosen is currently retired. Helene is a founding member of JGSCV and is the current Membership Vice President. She has been interested in genealogy since she was a teenager, and her family tree contains over 2000 names. She is a graduate of UCLA, worked for the County of Los Angeles in IT, and is the mother of three fine young men and grandmother of three.

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual and \$35 for a family. Anyone may join JGSCV  
<https://www.jgscv.org/pdf/membership%20application.pdf>

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



## 2023 JGSCV Meeting Dates

**NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10**  
**\*\*2:30-4:30 PM – Temple Adat Elohim\*\***

### 2023 Meetings

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
August	NO Meeting (IAJGS conference in London)	
September 10 2:30-4:30 pm	Helene Rosen	<i>Researching an American Family using Many Sources</i>
October 2:30-4:30 pm	TBA	
November 7:00-9:00pm	TBA	
December 2:30-4:30 pm	TBA	Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party

# Genealogy Odds and Ends



The Ancestor Hunt is focused on helping primarily hobbyist genealogy and family history researchers

Check out their newsletter:

<https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?e=4a34c14464&u=ddbcc6ba357c5cacca0a44be1&id=2635c0e47d>



*DNA of Medieval Skeletons in Germany Sheds Light on Origins of Ashkenazi Jews*

<https://tinyurl.com/349ndtcf>

*Where We Lived*

**44th IAJGS Conference  
on Jewish Genealogy**

**Philadelphia  
Aug 18-22, 2024**

*Save the date!*

[iajgs2024.org](http://iajgs2024.org)  
[jgasgp.org](http://jgasgp.org)



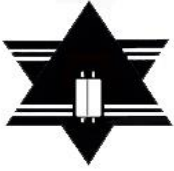
**Plan Ahead!**

International Association of  
Jewish Genealogical  
Societies (IAJGS)

- And the -

Jewish Genealogical and  
Archival Society of Greater  
Philadelphia (JGASGP)

**Conference coming in  
August 2024**



# 2024 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](http://www.JGSCV.org)

**Dues paid now are good through December 2024**

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.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_