

VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

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



JGSCV

October 2023

Volume 19 Issue 1

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We hope this finds you well and safe.

Our next meeting is Sunday, October 8 from 2:30-4:30 PM in the Social Hall at Temple Adat Elohim. Our "Ask the Experts" starts at 2:10 PM. Our speaker is our own Andrea Massion, presenting "*Reaching Rebecca: Missing Relatives and Mental Illness in Genealogical Research.*" At the start of her research 20 plus years ago, Andrea's Great Aunt Rebecca existed as only a photograph, taken before she left Ukraine as a child for the U.S. There were no documents in America marking her existence as an adult, and her nephews didn't know about her until Andrea tore down the brick wall in 2022. Andrea's engaging visuals and storytelling skills create a presentation that will also include the challenge to obtain hospital records, mental illness, and the mythology of "black sheep" in any family. See page 9 for more information.

Last month, JGSCV appointed the 2023 Nominations Committee for non-office board positions. **We have extended the deadline for board applications to September 25** in the hopes that some who are eligible and received the letter from Sonia Hoffman, Nominations Chairperson, will submit the form. The board application link is not only in Sonia's communication but is also on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxerjhc>

We met in person at Temple Adat Elohim in September and were welcomed by Cantor Shukiar. Our presenter was our own Helene Rosen, Vice President, Membership. Helene spoke on her research on the Texas branch of her third great-grandmother Sprinze Selig Badt's tree as the family grew roots in America. The family put down roots in La Grange, TX and became pillars of the community. The program focused on different American resources from the Civil War to their successful grocery business, and what she learned about their colorful lives as they became an all-American family. See page 3 for a write-up of Helene's presentation.

We are a membership organization. Therefore, we operate on your annual dues. If you have not yet joined or renewed for 2024, please do so now. Renewals now are good through December 31, 2024. I ask now for those who have not renewed to do so. We thank those who have already renewed. A renewal form is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8pp67r>.

Remember when shopping - even if only occasionally - shop at Ralph's and Food 4 Less and use your JGSCV code to get registered. See <https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html> for instructions.

(Cont'd next page)

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, October 8th
2:30-4:30 PM

*"Reaching Rebecca:
Missing Relatives
and Mental Illness
in Genealogical Research"*



Presented by
Andrea Massion

More info page 9

NOVEMBER MEETING

JANICE SELLERS -
*"BUBBIE, WHO ARE YOU?
FINDING THE MAIDEN NAMES IN YOUR
FAMILY TREE"*

WWW.JGSCV.ORG

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

2023 JGSCV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jan Meisels Allen, President and
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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.

JGSCV is a group that is predominately over 50 and with ageing comes increased health concerns. With COVID on the rise, we encourage mask-wearing at our meetings and members getting vaccinated and boosted.

JGSCV needs volunteers!

1. We need someone to volunteer with Issie Perel to record (audio and video) our meetings. This can be done using a smart phone. Files can be transferred to my computer by USB or other means. (I have a PC not a MAC so it has to be compatible.)
2. We have had several resignations from the Publicity Committee. We have several members who help us send out by email our meeting notice to local libraries, senior centers, synagogues, etc. It takes less than 2 hours a month. We will provide you with the meeting announcement and the list of places to email it to. If you are willing to help, please contact me at president@jgscv.org

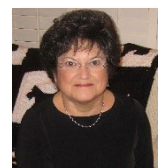
Remember that the Auschwitz exhibit at the Reagan Museum has been extended through January 28th. It is in our backyard so everyone should take advantage of this opportunity. See:

<https://www.reaganfoundation.org/library-museum/special-exhibits/auschwitz-exhibition/the-exhibition/>

Hal Bookbinder continues his series on *Practicing Safe Computing* with article #95, *Internet Relationship Scams*. See page 7.

Have a happy and healthy New year! L'Shana Tova!

Jan Meisels Allen



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Highlights from: “Researching an American Family using Many Sources”

By Diane Goldin

JGSCV member Helene Rosen presented the results of extensive research into a branch of her family tree. Her goal was to demonstrate the multitude of sources used to pull together her family’s story in America. A sub-title for her presentation might be “How to research the heck out of Texas Jews!”

Her investigation was piqued by her father’s sister, Aunt Esther, who filled Helene’s childhood with stories about a relative who’d been captain in the Confederate army and knew that other family members had become pillars of their community of La Grange, Fayette County, Texas.

Source: Cousin Arky

was determined to find out more. His Family Group Sheet is an early mapping of their ancestor, Sprinze Seelig Badt (pronounced “Bought”). Grandma Badt is Helene’s 3rd great grandmother. Arky’s research yielded important dates and burial locations. Based on that information, Helene was able to further research the descendants of Grandma Badt’s sons, Abraham and Selig, and to verify that the family name was changed from Seelig to Alexander.



Grandma Badt is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Austin, TX. Many founders and builders of Austin are buried there. In La Grange, there is a cemetery with 31 graves (it now sits on a residential front

lawn.) Most of its interred are Helene’s relatives.

Family Group Sheet for Sprinze Seelig Badt	
Husband:	Seelig or Badt
Father:	
Mother:	
Wife:	Sprinze Seelig Badt
Birth:	15 Nov 1776 in Kobelnick, Russia
Death:	07 Aug 1868 in Austin, Texas, USA
Burial:	See Notes
Father:	
Mother:	
Children:	
1	Name: Abraham Seelig Alexander
M	Birth: 19 Apr 1822 in Torn, Prussia
	Death: 25 Mar 1898 in La Grange, Texas
	Burial: Fayette County, Texas, United States of America
	Spouse: ?
2	Name: Alexander Seelig Selig Alexander
M	Birth: 05 Mar 1826 in Podgorz, Prussia
	Death: 16 Sep 1896 in La Grange, Texas
	Spouse: Bertha (Bottle) Rosenfield
3	Name: Cecelia Seelig
F	Birth: 1840 in Prussia
	Death: 29 Oct 1902 in Austin, TX; Buried in Oakwood Cemetery
	Burial: Austin, Travis County, Texas, United States of America
	Spouse: Julius Cohn
4	Name: ? Seelig
F	Spouse: ? Isbitzky
5	Name: Minnie Seelig
F	Spouse: ? Seelig
6	Name: ? Seelig
F	Spouse: ? Goldstein
Notes:	
	Sprinze Seelig Badt Known as 'Grandma Badt' Badt - Pronounced 'bought'
	She traveled back and forth between Russia and Texas
	Buried in Beth Israel Cemetery #1, Seelig Pit, Austin, Texas

*Family Group Sheet for Sprinze Seelig Badt
3rd great grandmother of Helene Rosen*

Helene’s first resource was her cousin, Arky. He was Helene’s Aunt Esther’s grandson. Arky grew up hearing all the same stories as Helene and

This is Helene’s 3rd Great Grandmother, Sprinze Seelig Badt’s, tombstone. It states that Sprinze was 112 years old when she died, but Helene’s research via the 1880 census and other sources place her death at somewhere between age 93 and 101. She had six children, including a daughter who was Helene’s 2nd great grandmother. Her sons, Abraham and Selig, and their descendants are the relatives Helene traced for this presentation.



Source: "Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas"

coauthored by H. Weiner and Ken Roseman

Lone Stars of David presents a different narrative of Jews who ventured to Texas before the battle of the Alamo, who fought for the Confederacy, who herded cattle up the Chisholm Trail, who drilled for oil, and who forged Jewish communities far from New York's Lower East Side.

Helene found the book and was delighted to find her relatives' names inside! The book provided verification that both Selig Alexander and Abraham Alexander were captains for the Confederacy. The family came to New York in 1850 and Selig moved to La Grange to be near his wife's brother.



"Lone Stars of David: The Jews of Texas"
coauthored by H. Weiner and Ken Roseman

Soon, Abraham moved to La Grange too and owned a hat factory that supplied the Confederacy.

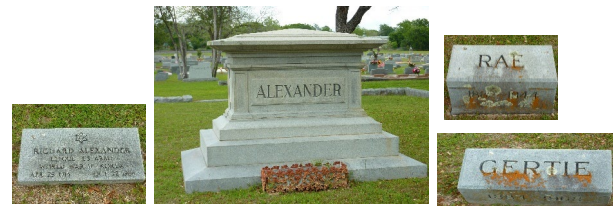
Source: Helene visits La Grange, TX



Helene decided to visit La Grange, TX and learn about her relatives' hometown. The town's cemetery is

now situated on a private, residential front lawn.

The Alexander family later purchased plots at a newer town cemetery that had two Jewish sections.

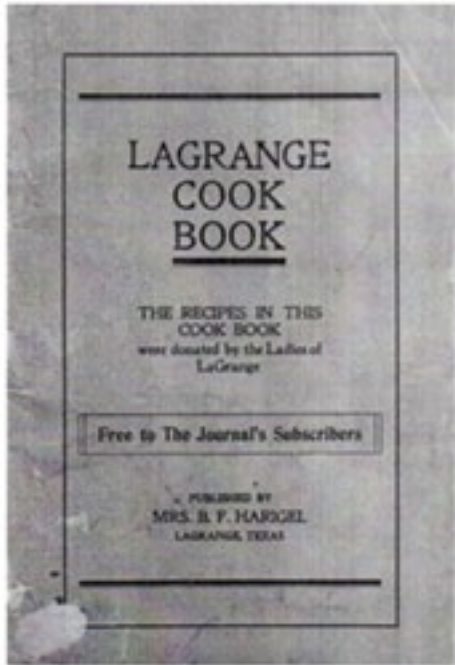


She took many photos in the charming town, a place where her relatives thrived, though most Alexanders left in the 1960s. Consequently, the Alexander family plot has many vacancies from family who moved away from the area.

The only antisemitic incident that Helene is aware of was to Dorethea Ackerman, the second wife of Abraham Alexander. She was not Jewish and although she converted, her family disowned her.

**Source: Google
La Grange Historic Cookbook**

Helene discovered the existence of a cookbook thanks to a link to a 1907 newspaper article. She further discovered that someone else had obtained a copy to republish it and that person was kind enough to send Helene recipes that pertained to her relatives -- including one for Cream Chicken and another for Pecan Pudding.



The cookbook also contained information about the recipes' authors, offering Helene a glimpse into their lives.



The Ladies of La Grange, circa 1908

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE RECIPE DONORS

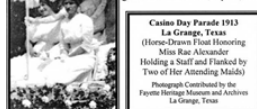
A Collection of Biographies & Photographs of the Recipe Donors Featured in the "LaGrange Cook Book" 1909 (Continued)

Alexander, Miss Rae

Miss Rae Alexander was born on January 18, 1882 to Abraham and Dora Alexander of La Grange, Texas. Rachel Alexander or "Rae" as she was called by family and friends, was the eighth child born to her parents. Rae and two of her other sisters, Essie and Gerrie Alexander, were also recipe donors, and all three chose to remain single.

However, Rae Alexander was the only daughter to become actively involved in the family business.

The grocery store was in a frame building located at the corner of Washington and Travis streets and next door to the Alexander home. The one story building covered only sixty by hundred feet, but the Alexander Grocery Store made good use of its limited space, and the business prospered. In 1900, the grocery business incorporated as the Alexander Brothers Grocery Co. and moved to Colorado Street into two brick buildings. The Depression years took its toll on the Alexander grocery business, and the Alexander family ceased operations in about 1938.



Rae Alexander died in La Grange at the age of sixty-two years on July 27, 1944. She was buried in the "New" City Cemetery at La Grange, Texas in the Alexander Family Plot.

Bio of recipe donor and a relative of Helene

Source: The Houston Jewish Herald-Voice - <https://jhvonline.com/>

Helene found many resources to substantiate the timelines of her relatives' lives. She also uncovered poignant tidbits, such as the following obituary for Seelig Alexander (her 2nd great uncle) published in 1896:

Capt. Alexander, an old citizen of La Grange, was found dead in bed at his house in that city Wednesday morning. Heart failure was the probable cause. He had often expressed the wish that he might drop off suddenly and without pain, and it seems that his wish was fulfilled.

Source: JewishGen Family Finder

Helene had success listing towns of interest and family names on JewishGen's Family Finder (<https://jewishgen.org/jgff>). It was here that someone suggested that Abraham Alexander may have fathered a child with his maid – though Helene believes this is unlikely.



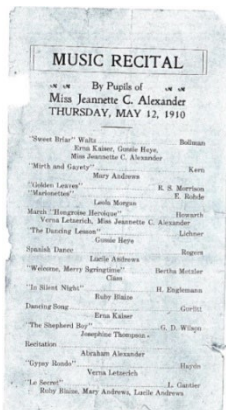
Abraham Alexander

Source: Texas Historical Society - <https://txjhs.org/>

This society has a publication that is issued quarterly on extensive topics. It was in one of these issues that Helene discovered a photo of the family home off the main square, near the courthouse. The house is no longer standing.



Source: La Grange Library-
<https://lagrangelibrary.org/>



The library had maintained articles about their early residents, including many about her family. She found old stock certificates and a music recital program from a relative's classroom. These artifacts helped her recreate the lives of her relatives. One was an activist who

petitioned to save the town's oak trees.

Source: Google Again!!

Helene got a great pay-off for returning to Google -- even after she'd already searched there. Upon repeat visits, she found Selig Alexander's passport application attached to a loyalty oath pledging allegiance to the United States. She also unearthed a cousin's beautiful artwork of an oak tree that had once stood in La Grange.

Source: Ancestry
[\(https://www.ancestry.com/\)](https://www.ancestry.com/)

Helene has a lot of luck researching those little green leaf hints.



Source: Facebook and Google Alerts

Helene has connected with relatives and gotten updates via these methods.

Source: Serendipity

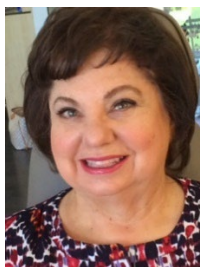
Sometimes, a person just gets lucky. Helene has stumbled upon information unexpectedly and only because towns/names are fresh in her mind. It helps her recognize when something or someone overlaps with her family.

The audience was rapt as Helene spoke about her research. She has rich stories that are documented in beautiful slides. The lives of Sprinze Seelig Badt, born in 1776, and her sons, Abraham and Selig, are also the story of a developing La Grange TX in the 1800s.

A brief question and answer period followed Helene's presentation. Someone asked if the Alexander family had attended synagogue and Helene said the temple is located outside of La Grange in Schulenburg, TX. Helene is not certain if her ancestors attended the temple but knows many descendants no longer practice Judaism.

Someone else asked about immigration through Galveston, TX. Helene has not personally researched it but knows that many Jews did arrive via its port. It might be a potential wealth of information for Jewish genealogists:

<https://www.isjl.org/texas-galveston-encyclopedia.html>



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.

Practicing Safe Computing Article #95: “Internet Relationship Scams”

By Hal Bookbinder



Relationship (or romance) scam victims are not just the young and naïve. Anyone seeking connections, including those who have lost their mate, are at risk. The FTC reports that in 2022, nearly 70,000 people reported losing \$1.3 billion in relationship scams. Since many likely do not report, the actual losses are likely higher. This is a nine-fold increase over the reported losses of just four years ago. Increased isolation due to the pandemic may have contributed to this.

A typical online relationship scam quickly progresses from a contact out of the blue, to strikingly similar interests, to professions of admiration and love, to immediate need of financial help or “can’t lose” investment opportunities, to ghosting, with your money and the phantom admirer gone forever.

Relationship scammers’ techniques

- Sending friend requests to people in your network, expecting some to accept, making it appear that you have friends in common.
- Amazing coincidences, in which the scammer’s passions, politics, and interests seem to closely match yours.
- Seeming to take a genuine interest in you, flattering you, and even expressing their love for you relatively soon after making contact.
- Wanting to move the conversation from the relationship app to email, WhatsApp, Telegraph, or another private messaging site.
- Telling you that they are unable to meet you in person. Common excuses are inability to travel and offshore or international work.
- Trying to convince you to invest, send money to resolve a problem, pay gift fees, or pay for transportation so that they can join you.

How to avoid becoming a victim

- Be careful about accepting new friendship requests. Don’t share personal information, including phone numbers and addresses.
- Suspect it’s a scam if the new admirer has excuses, no matter how plausible, for not meeting you in person.
- Share that you are in an online relationship with family and friends and listen to their feedback.
- If the online admirer shares suggestive, or even explicit, photos and asks you to do the same, **don’t do it!** and **block the admirer!**
- Do a reverse image search on any photo they send. You may find it on the web. Here is a recent [Forbes article](#) on how to do this.
- Never send money, crypto, gift card numbers or wire funds to a person you have met online, or act on their investment tips.

Artificial intelligence (AI) will make relationship scams even more potent. AI will likely be used to identify potential targets, gather personal information, compose convincing messages, and even keep the dialogue going with multiple targets simultaneously. To read more, Google, “[Relationship Scams](#)”.



Separate issue: You need to be on iOS 16.6.1 on your iPhone and iPad. To update, open “Settings”, select “General”, and then “Software Update”, and if not up to date, tap to begin installation of iOS 16.6.1 Here is a [write-up](#) from Apple on this security update. And, here is a more informative [article](#) from the *Times of Israel*.

This is the ninety-fifth 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

We Need You!

Share your stories and your skills with our society!

Let's grow together.



JGSCV Family Histories

This is your space to share your family stories.

Joan Adler, our June 2020 speaker, suggested our members write up memories and genealogical discoveries to publish in our newsletter.

This month we did not receive any submissions.

We would love to continue the series. If you have something to share please send to Diane at newslettereditor@JGSCV.org and Jan at president@jgscv.org

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>.



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, October 8th from 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Ask the Experts/Schmoozing Corner begins at 2:10 PM

NOTE THE NEW MEETING TIME



OCTOBER PROGRAM
***Reaching Rebecca:
Missing Relatives and Mental Illness
in Genealogical Research***



Andrea Massion

The Program:

Andrea's great Aunt Rebecca existed only as a photograph, taken before she left Ukraine as a child for the U.S. No documents in America marked her existence as an adult, and her nephews did not know of her until Andrea tore down the brick wall in 2022 – more than 20 years after Andrea began her research. Her presentation will include the challenge to obtain hospital records, mental illness, and the mythology of “black sheep” in any family. Her session will provide an overview of state mental health services in the early 20th century, examples of other families' recent discoveries, puzzling out suspicious results, uncovering the correct information and why ethics demands sharing these results. Finally, the saga of Ukrainian-born Rebecca who disappeared from records and memory in the 1930s in Colorado will be revealed by Andrea in loving tribute to her lost great-aunt.

The Speaker:

Andrea Massion has been researching family history for over 25 years. She is an engaging storyteller and a frequent contributor to JGSCV's newsletter. She was published in the *NGS Journal* in 2020. Andrea is retired from 30 years working in Jewish Music education, and public-school library management. Her research on the Jewish community of Iowa Center, Wyoming can be found at the Chugwater Museum in Wyoming, USA and in the National Library of Israel.

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>



A family photo taken before U.S. immigration marked her existence.



2023 JGSCV Meeting Dates

NEXT MEETING: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8
****2:30-4:30 PM – Temple Adat Elohim****

2023 Meetings

DATE	PRESENTER	PROGRAM
October 8 2:30-4:30 pm	Andrea Massion	<i>Reaching Rebecca: Missing Relatives and Mental Illness in Genealogical Research</i>
November 6 7:00-9:00pm	Janice Sellers	<i>Bubbie, Who Are You?</i> <i>Finding the Maiden Names in Your Family Tree</i>
December 3 2:30-4:30 pm	TBA	Annual Meeting, Elections, Chanukah Party

Genealogy Odds and Ends



Board for Certification of Genealogists®

The Board for Certification of Genealogists (BCG) will host five live webinars, free and available to the public, as this year's Reisinger Memorial Lecture Series on October 20, 2023.

Five leading genealogists will speak on topics such as meeting the Genealogical Proof Standard, verifying genealogical stories, and using DNA evidence. The webinars are part of the Joy Reisinger Memorial Lecture Series and are presented in conjunction with *Legacy Family Tree Webinars*. For more info, go to:

<https://eogn.com/page-18080/13257416>

Note: *This lecture series will be in-person and live streamed on Mountain Daylight Time (MDT). Please check your time zone for accuracy.*

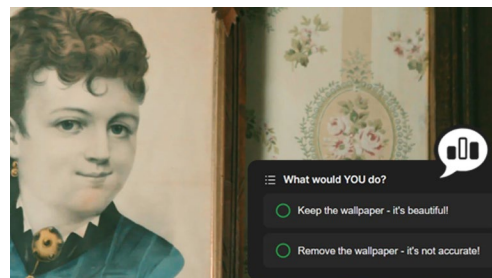


The Value of Using US Tax Records in Genealogy Research

<https://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com/why-tax-records>

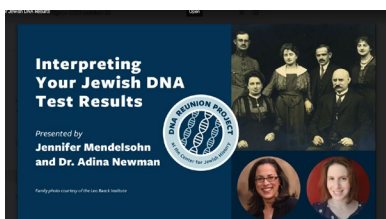
JOIN THE DEBATE: Wallpaper or Paint?

<https://www.tenement.org/blog/join-the-debate-wallpaper-or-paint/>



Interpreting your Jewish DNA Results

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0oJOoXpoB8>





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

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.)
