



Venturing Into Our Past

JGSCV

The newsletter of the Jewish Genealogical Society of
the Conejo Valley & Ventura County



July 2024

Volume 19 Issue 10

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NEXT MEETING

Sunday, July 14th, 2024

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

via **Zoom**

**"MEMBERS
SHARE
THEIR STORIES"**

Presented by

YOU!

See pages 3 and 11

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 include beginners and experienced genealogists who share with each other.

WWW.JGSCV.ORG

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Greetings Jewish Genealogy enthusiasts,

I hope that you are enjoying the summer weather and outdoor activities. We spared no expense (and actually paid no expenses) for our next program on July 14. That is because it will be held on Zoom and our presenters are from the ranks of our own skilled membership. We will have members present their research, discoveries, and brick walls. It should be most interesting to hear from our colleagues. Topics include publishing a family history book; Austrian research and family events; grave topics and family lore; Jewish adoptions of black-market babies; unexpected relatives, and more. Look for the virtual flyer in your email and on page 3 of this newsletter. If any additional members would like to participate, please contact me at president@jgscv.org.

I recall talking to members who began their genealogy research in the dusty corners of libraries and other record archives. Back then, microfilms, microfiches and even later CDs were invaluable sources of data. Now, we have billions of records available online making our research exponentially easier to conduct. The FamilySearch library, a major source of genealogical records and data, has digitized all their records. Researchers no longer must order microfilm and search out machine readers. FamilySearch reports that after 83 years of filming the world's historical genealogical records, they've completed digitizing 2.4 million rolls of microfilm. The best part is that the archive, which contains information on more than 11.5 billion individuals, is now available for free on [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org).

Technology has changed how we do our research. We can surf the net at any hour from the comfort of our home. We can backup and store information on pen drives that hold more information than the first spacecraft. Your cell phone has more capacity and power than the computer used for the first trip to the moon! With that in mind, we are looking forward to new JGSCV events to aid us in our research. We plan to present information about new devices to retrieve, scan, and store information.

Any discussion of technology should mention two specific contributions by JGSCV. The first, of course, is the series "Practicing Safe Computing" by Hal Bookbinder. These articles are in our newsletter and compiled on our website. The second recommendation is our most informative website, [JGSCV.org](https://www.jgscv.org), which is designed and maintained by our webmaster David Oseas. Our website features past newsletters, library holdings, research resources, meeting announcements and a wealth of additional information. We are continually updating the website information and welcome suggestions for new topics.

JGSCV will continue to have meetings on Zoom while also holding in-person meetings to facilitate camaraderie and collaboration. We are also planning a continued association with JGSLA to host programs of mutual interest.

Enjoy the comfortable and relaxed days of summer. Am Yisrael Chai.

**Issie Perel
JGSCV President**



ATTENTION, PLEASE.

**CALLING ALL
MEMBERS OF
JGSCV!**



JULY 14, 2024, 2 PM IS OUR ANNUAL

MEMBERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

**MEETING ON ZOOM. GET ON THE LIST TO
SHARE YOUR BEST GENEALOGY STORY, GOOF,
ADVENTURE, BRICK WALL OR ADVICE.**

**BE BRAVE. WE CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR WHAT YOU
HAVE TO SAY. STEP UP TO THE ZOOM MIC! YOU'LL
HAVE UP TO 10 MINUTES TO MAKE A SPLASH.**

(TECH SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE) TRY IT!

CONTACT OUR PRESIDENT, ISSIE PEREL AT

PRESIDENT@JGSCV.ORG AND SAY:

I'M SHARING ON JULY 14.

JGSCV June 2024 Speaker: Michael Morgenstern

“A Gallery of Missing Husbands: Family Deserters in Jewish Genealogy”

By Diane Goldin

Michael began his presentation with an introduction to *The Forward* (Yiddish: פֿאָרווערטס; Romanized: *Forverts*), a Yiddish newspaper launched in 1897 for a burgeoning working class, Jewish immigrant audience. It was written in a colloquial style so anyone who spoke and read Yiddish could enjoy it. Michael has no affiliation with the paper, though he relies on its archives for a rich trove of genealogical information.

This presentation focused specifically on the small – but nonetheless significant – problem of family desertion. Mostly (but not exclusively) men, the deserters left families to begin new lives, leaving desperate spouses and children behind. The deserted wives often had no means to support themselves or their children and found themselves unable to divorce and remarry without a “Get” – the formal Jewish divorce document. This left deserted families in financial and social peril.

The *Forward* ran personal ads from people trying to locate relatives, but the first missing spouse notice appeared in October 1905. From then on, there was a noticeable uptick in the search for missing husbands, and an increasing demand for these ads yielded a new column: *Gallery of Missing Husbands* in November 1908.

By 1909, the column was printed on the back page every Sunday, with readership far beyond the United States. *The Forward* was fast becoming the leading Yiddish newspaper in the world, and even abandoned wives in Russia knew to write it for information on their missing spouses.

The Forward's writers were motivated to help the deserted wives and children. It must be appreciated how much families truly suffered in desertion. Some mothers were forced to put one or more children in an orphanage, and it is estimated that one in every five Jewish “orphans” was actually a child abandoned



by a father. The *Forward* also printed success cases where husbands returned.

There are cases of wives preemptively submitting photos of their husbands to the paper as leverage to keep them home. A man

would be warned that a disappearance would get his photo printed in the next issue, prompting some to stay put. In other instances, men would plan their desertion by gathering up photos and taking them to avoid having their visages in the weekly column.

It is important to note that the turn of the last century is regarded as a successful time in Jewish history despite its hardships. One of the reasons for immigrant success

was the support provided by the *Forward* and other newly formed Jewish social welfare agencies. These efforts became more organized and effective when Leon Gottlieb, Sunday editor of *The Forward*, attended the 6th Biennial

Convention of Jewish Charities in St. Louis in 1909. Leon had been feeling overwhelmed by the demands of his job, spending long, grueling hours interviewing deserted families and trying to publish the details of their missing husbands. He knew the problem was more than his newspaper could handle. He was heartened when everyone at the Convention began discussing his *Gallery* column. One agency, the National Desertion Bureau (established in 1905), repurposed itself to become a full detective agency combined with Jewish social welfare. Soon it was tracking down deserters all over the world. Jewish welfare agencies lobbied hard to make desertions a felony, and



Ads often used the verbiage of a wife needing to become "unbound" - meaning she was stuck without a Get.

ultimately worked to reconcile families and/or force spousal and child support from the deserters.

By early 1910, Canada had become a haven for deserters who learned that it would not extradite for family desertion. This meant that even if a missing spouse was located, he would not be forced to return or make restitution to his deserted family. The National Desertion Bureau came up with a creative workaround in 1918. It wrote to the Canadian local border officials after locating a deserter. Their goal wasn't to extradite the man but instead convince the Canadian authorities that he was an undesirable citizen who'd left a wife and many children in the United States. The man had not yet naturalized in Canada and the authorities there sent him back to Russia. While this did not help this deserter's family, it sent a strong message to all potential deserters seeking refuge in Canada. It would no longer provide a haven for them. Eventually, Canada made desertion an extraditable crime.

Bigamy was also a problem amongst deserters. In some states, a marriage license required little paperwork or proof. Deserters used this loophole to restart their lives elsewhere with new spouses, claiming to be widowed or never married. Unbelievably, some of those men left their second families too, becoming repeat deserters. One "hall of fame" entry had 8 desertions listed in the *Gallery*.

Michael found deserters as young as 19 and as old as 71. Some abandoned their families in other countries and before they could be brought to the United States, while others walked away from their families here. One thing that impacted the incidence of desertions was when the US entered a war. The draft card asked if a potential draftee supported his family. Amazingly, and perhaps not surprisingly, many men checked the box to avoid the draft, resulting in a noticeable decline in desertions.

Michael has translated and entered more than 3,200 *Gallery* records on [JewishGen](https://www.jewishgen.org) and he continues to add to the database. It is searchable, and an excellent resource for genealogical purposes. He has followed up on some of the deserters, including a woman who abandoned her husband and kids in Norfolk, VA. Michael located the family on Ancestry.com and reached out. Stunningly, the woman's descendants had no idea she'd had a prior family whom she deserted.

The presentation concluded with a slide and story of a woman in Warsaw, Poland, circa 1901. She is photographed with her young son and Michael told the audience that the woman was ill and slowly losing her eyesight. Her husband left for the US in 1902. In 1910, he petitioned for Naturalization and acknowledged on the form that he had a wife and son in Poland. That paperwork was denied because of an

issue with a witness. The man tried again a few years later, this time declaring he was not married and had no children. He then remarried (lying on the marriage license) and the following year, had a son with his second wife.

That man was Michael's great-grandfather, and the woman and her child were his great-grandmother and grandfather. This desertion story is also his family's story, and it fuels his interest in the topic.

In 1906, his grandfather became caretaker and breadwinner for his

Search *The Gallery of Missing Husbands*

*3,200 records with more being added



1. Go to [JewishGen.org](https://www.jewishgen.org)
2. Search by Surname



3. Scroll to results from "USA" and click on records found on *The Forward: A Gallery of Missing Husbands*

mother, who by then was completely blind. His grandfather eventually went to medical school, came to the US, and found his father and his younger half-sibling! Though his grandfather had a difficult relationship with his deserter father, he became very close to his younger brother – despite an almost 20-year age gap. He mentored him through medical school and the two remained close throughout their lives. Michael is grateful for his grandfather’s choice to embrace his younger sibling.



Michael Morgenstern’s great grandmother with his grandfather.

Michael’s great grandmother stayed in Warsaw until 1938, when things there got very dangerous for Jews. His grandfather sent his first wife to bring her to Mexico where they lived, and his medical practice was thriving. She lived out her life with her son and had the great joy of knowing all four of her grandchildren.

Michael stated that his ancestor did something terrible, but his story is important and remains a part of Michael’s family’s history. Michael is also grateful that his grandfather was able to make some peace with his great grandfather and have a loving relationship with his half-brother.

The fascinating presentation concluded with a brief question and answer session. Michael welcomes your further comments and queries at: mjmorganstern00@gmail.com

We are grateful for Michael’s research, and for his informative and thoughtful presentation. He introduced many of us to an unknown or ignored phenomenon within our shared Jewish immigration story.



Michael’s great-grandfather, grandfather, and half great-uncle (left, in USA and above in Mexico)

FURTHER EXPLORATION

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

A new on-site exhibition: *Runaway Husbands, Desperate Families: The Story of the National Desertion Bureau*. Open through Fall 2024, a must-see if you’re visiting NY.

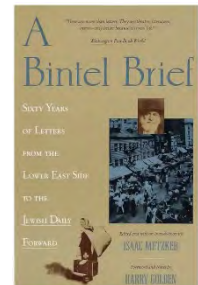
<https://yivo.org/NDB-Release>

<https://yivo.org/National-Desertion-Bureau>

The Bintel Brief

Before there was “Dear Abby”, there was the “Bintel Brief” (a bundle of letters), an advice column started in *The Forward* in 1906. Anonymous questions were answered on myriad topics affecting recent Jewish immigrants. Advice was given on finances, family issues, religion, and cultural adjustment. The columns have been translated from Yiddish and appear in the book “A Bintel Brief: Sixty Years of Letters from the Lower East Side to the Jewish Daily Forward.” Available on Amazon and other booksellers.

<https://www.amazon.com/Bintel-Brief-Letters-Jewish-Forward/dp/0805209808>



Agunah (singular); Agunot (plural)

The ancient concept of being females being “bound” and “unbound” via marriage and a Get, the Jewish divorce decree. It literally means “anchored” or “chained” and is exemplified by the suffering of women who were deserted by their husbands. Read a contemporary discussion of *Agunah* as told through the lens of the October 7 massacre In Israel.

<https://tinyurl.com/5h3ena4n>



Orphans in Manitoba, Canada

By Debby Wenkart

Michael Morgenstern's presentation, "A Gallery of Missing Husbands: Family Deserters in Jewish Genealogy" at first made me think "no way, not in my family."

But a few things Mr. Morgenstern said struck a personal chord. For example, he mentioned that some people left Europe to start a new life and may have intentionally left family behind. He also said that some men escaped their family responsibilities by fleeing to Canada. (Canada did not extradite family "deserters" until the 1920s.)

I recalled a funeral we attended some years ago for my mother's first cousin, Manny. An elderly gentleman at the funeral began talking to us about my mother's stepfather. I don't remember the gentleman's name, but he said he'd been raised in the Jewish Orphanage in Winnipeg along with my mother's cousin (whose funeral we were attending.) The gentleman spoke fondly about my mother's stepfather, a man we called "Zaida" growing up. He told several stories about Zaida, and the one I most remember is that when this man was able to leave the orphanage, he got a delivery job. He didn't have a truck, so Zaida gave him a truck and trusted him to return it when he no longer needed it.

Cousin Manny, along with some of his siblings, were placed in the orphanage until their single mother could afford to support them. So, what happened to Manny's father? I decided to investigate further using the records I located on Ancestry. It seems that Manny was only 7 years old when his father died at age 43. The mother was left with 6 young children. Although I could not find any further records about the mother, I believe that she most likely emigrated from Russia and spoke limited English.

Zaida had six children from his first marriage and my maternal grandmother had seven from hers; their second marriage to each other created a large blended family.

When I was a child, they split their time between Zaida's family in Winnipeg and my grandmother's family who emigrated to Los Angeles. Zaida died when I was about seven but I remember him as a kindly grandfather who



The Jewish Orphanage of Western Canada, Winnipeg

always brought us candy and "gelt". Zaida was much loved and respected in my family due to his generosity and philanthropic support of Jewish organizations in Winnipeg.

Sunday's presentation prompted me to find out more about the Jewish Orphanage in Winnipeg and my Zaida's part in their history. According to the Manitoba Historical Society, the Orphanage was founded in 1912 in response to a rumor that Jewish children were being housed in non-Jewish orphanages. There was a concern that Jewish children would be lost to the community; thus a Jewish fraternal group, B'nai Brith, and a women's group, founded the orphanage. The orphanage had an Orthodox rabbi, a synagogue and observed Jewish holidays and traditions. The children attended the local public schools during the day and religious school in the afternoon.

Our family was very proud of Zaida. He was featured in an article in the Winnipeg newspaper in 1948 titled "Father" of 900 Children, Philanthropist Celebrates 75th



birthday." According to the newspaper, David Spivak (aka Zaida), played an active role in the Orphanage beginning in 1916 when he became treasurer. Subsequently, he became President of the Board three times and at the time when the article was written, he was still an active member on the Board of Directors.

The orphanage closed in 1948 in response to a belief that there were other ways to support families and children. The Orphanage became a Jewish Community Center and its work was carried out by the Winnipeg Jewish Child and Family Service agency.

Moose Jaw Times-Herald, 2 May 1961

Further Reading

The Manitoba Historical Society Archives

Manitoba History: The Jewish Orphanage of Western Canada and the Economics of Religious Communal Identity

https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/81/jewishorphanage.shtml



Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, Inc.

The Jewish Heritage Centre maintains an extensive research library on topics related to Canadian (and local) Jewish history, the Holocaust, and many other topics.

<https://www.jhcwc.org/research/collections-library>

"Escape from Russia" by Debby Wenkart

JGSCV newsletter, April 2022, pages 8-9

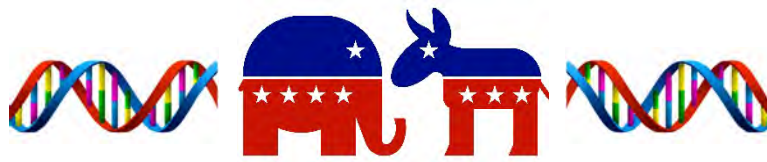
https://jgscv.org/pdf/newsletters/Venturing_V17_N7.pdf

Canada: Jewish Family History Research Guide

<https://www.cjh.org/pdfs/Canada.pdf>

Jewish Orphans and Orphanages

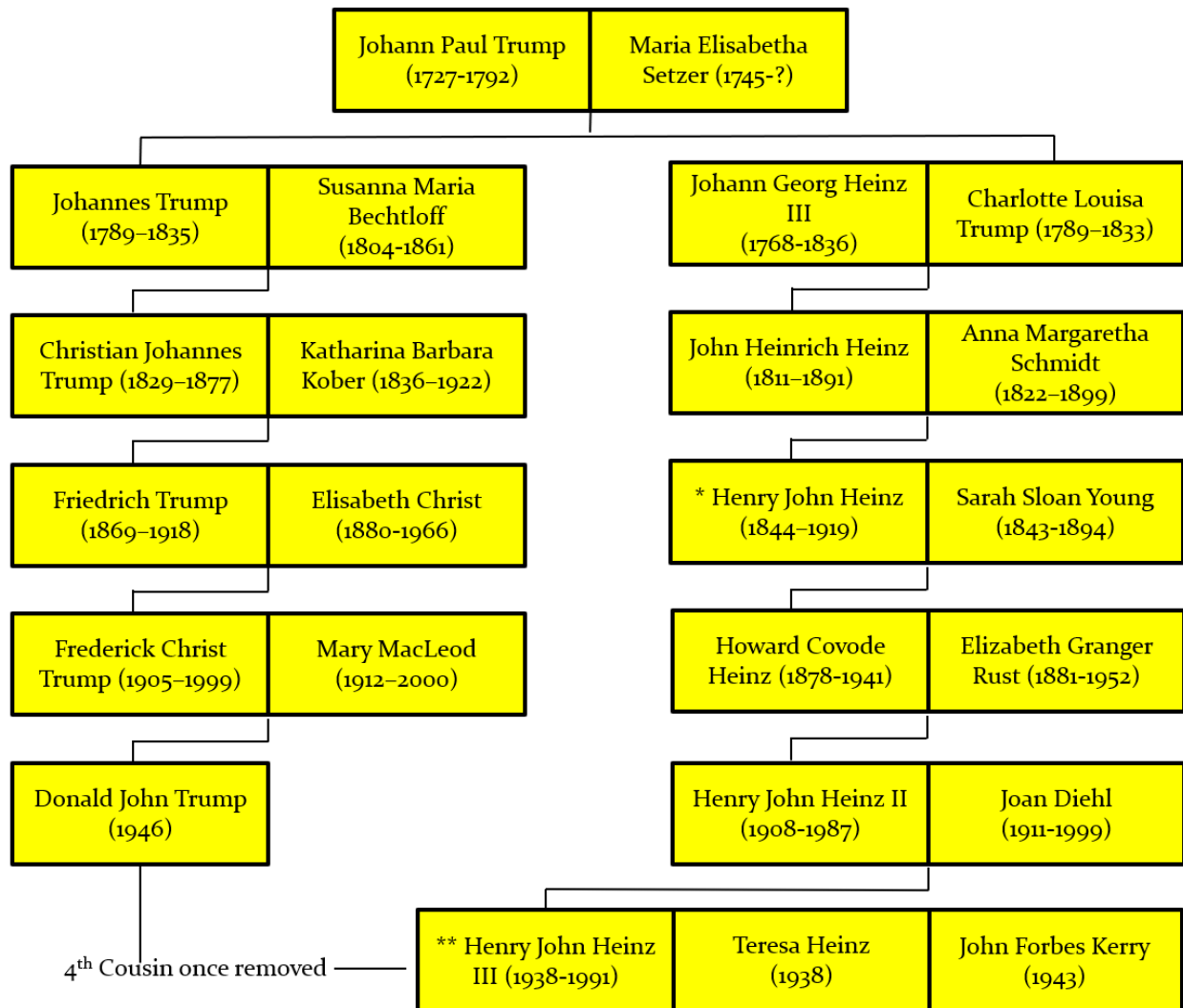
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Jewish_Orphans_and_Orphanages



Genealogic link between Donald Trump and John Kerry

By Hal Bookbinder

Last month's article on the ancestry of the leading presidential candidates mentioned the genealogical connection between Donald Trump and John Kerry. I have since researched it further and constructed the relationship chart below.



Henry John Heinz * founded the Heinz Company. His great grandson, Senator John Heinz ** (Pennsylvania) died in a plane crash in 1991. His widow, Teresa Heinz (née Maria Teresa Thierstein Simões-Ferreira), married Senator John Kerry (Massachusetts) in 1995.

And here is a link to an interesting article regarding a connection between President Biden and President Lincoln: <https://tinyurl.com/3hzyjfv6>.

JGSCV Updates



Call for Genealogy Volunteers

The Ventura County Fair runs from Wednesday, July 31 until Sunday, August 11. Volunteers are needed for the Family History booth in the Hobby Building. Shifts are for 3-4 hours using supplied computers. You do not need to be an expert, just know how to search the census and vital records for people that come up to the booth.

Familiarity with JewishGen.org is especially needed.

Parking is on your own, but you will receive a free pass into the fair that day.

Questions? Please call Dalya at 805-482-4868 (landline). Dalya is one of the founding members of JGSCV.

To sign up go to: <https://signup.com/go/ffmSHLb>

Where We Lived

**44th IAJGS International Conference
on Jewish Genealogy**

**Philadelphia
Aug 18-22, 2024**



Don't miss out! Free Philadelphia Genealogy Resources

Some of us have already signed up for the conference. Please note that Early Bird registration ends on July 4, 2024.

<https://www.iajgs.org/conference/>

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

(*and surrounding areas)

will hold a **Zoom Meeting**

Sunday, July 14th from 2:00-4:00PM

**Zoom link will be sent out the Friday before the meeting.*



JULY PROGRAM

"Members Share Their Stories"

This member-led program has long been a favorite!

Come to share, or to listen to other's share, fascinating genealogical research and adventures.

Hear about successes, failures, brick walls, artifacts and treasures.

Ask questions and perhaps get answers too.

Assistance is available if you need help with a PowerPoint for Zoom.
(No need to be hesitant or shy, it's easy!)

If you wish to participate in the program,
please contact Issie Perel, president@JGSCV.org.

Each participant will be up to 10 minutes to share—depending on
the number of presenters.

We'd love to hear your genealogical story.

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV. Annual
dues are \$30 for an individual and \$35 for a family.

<https://www.jgscv.org/membership.html>

Practicing Safe Computing Article #104: “Free product trials”

By Hal Bookbinder



Online services, subscriptions, and applications often provide a free trial period. You understand that if you do not cancel prior to the end of the trial period, your credit card will be charged, and the charges will continue until you cancel. Typically, once a charge is made, the company will not reverse it simply because you neglected to cancel on time.

They count on some finding the product well worth the cost and consciously deciding to continue their subscription. They count on others procrastinating, forgetting, or simply giving up on cancelling before the trial period has ended. It is up to you to understand clearly how to cancel and to do this prior to the end of the trial period.

While this is fair and reasonable, the cancellation process is not always easy or obvious. You might expect that if you log into the site, there would be a button to cancel. However, this is not typically the case. You may have to search for it. And, sometimes, it cannot be found at all. Don't wait till the trial period is about to expire to discover this.

Recently, I signed up for the trial period of a popular suite of applications, providing my credit card and agreeing to be charged a monthly fee starting at the end of my trial. If I had agreed to an annual renewal, the price per month would have been considerably less. As I did not want to be on the hook if I somehow missed the deadline, I opted for the monthly option.

As the deadline for the trial period approached, I decided that, while I liked it, I did not find sufficient value in the product to pay \$29.95 each month. I logged into the product and tried every conceivable link to cancel my subscription. Finally, I gave up and searched my emails for the subscription confirmation to see if it had cancellation instructions.

The confirmation provided a link to cancel the subscription. I clicked on it and none of the displayed links seemed to relate to cancellation. I tried the various links and found the one which took me to the cancellation option. I clicked on it and was presented with a screen that highlighted the great features of the product, encouraging me not to cancel.

I paged down and found the button to confirm my cancellation. Once I chose it, I was presented with yet another page that let me know that they were sorry to see me go and again touted the great benefits of keeping my subscription. Had I assumed that I was through, I would have remained subscribed. However, when I paged down, I found yet another, and final, cancellation confirmation button.

The lesson here is clear. When you sign up for a trial period, read the materials carefully to be clear on the cancellation process. If the confirmation email includes a cancellation link, be sure to keep it handy. If you must call a phone number, be wary. If you get through, you are sure to be speaking to a most convincing agent whose employment is based on their ability to keep you as a customer.

This is the one-hundred and fourth article in a series by JGSCV founding member Hal Bookbinder. Hal is also a Past President of JGSLA and IAIGS. He is the 2010 recipient of the IAIGS Lifetime Achievement Award, and his online skills are well documented. All the Safe Computing articles by Hal Bookbinder are available on the JGSCV website

Genealogy Odds and Ends

1. Got Nordic Roots?

MyHeritage announces the addition of 11.6 million new Nordic newspaper pages to [OldNews.com](https://www.oldnews.com). OldNews.com enables genealogists, researchers, and history enthusiasts to search, save, and share articles about people and events throughout history. The new content includes historical local, regional and national newspapers, periodicals and gazettes from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Greenland and the Faroe Islands with articles dating back to 1666, but mostly from the 19th century. <https://www.oldnews.com/en>

2. Legacy Family Tree software, Version 10 has just been released & it is now completely free.

<https://tinyurl.com/mryt9a9t>

3. Archaeologists Find Evidence of the Last Jewish Revolt Against Rome.

The Gallus Revolt happened around 1,650 years ago when the Jews of Lod and the Galilee arose against Rome. <https://tinyurl.com/etcfm92h>

4. JewishGen Education Courses Summer 2024

Courses include an Immigration Study Group, Brick Walls, and Genetic Genealogy.

<https://www.jewishgen.org/Education/edu-courses.asp>

5. Medieval synagogue discovered under Spanish church.

Remnants of a medieval synagogue built in the 1600s were discovered during restoration of altarpiece in Santa Maria la Blanca church in Seville.

<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology/article-801270>

6. "Treasure" is new movie (in theaters now) starring Stephen Fry and Lena Dunham as a Holocaust survivor and his journalist daughter, traveling to Poland in 1991 to visit the sites from the father's past.

Dunham filmed parts of her new movie in Łódź, Poland, where she herself has family roots. <https://tinyurl.com/sa2cf3bu>

7. Ancient DNA: "DNA says you're related to a Viking, a medieval German Jew or a 1700s enslaved African? What a genetic match really means"

<https://tinyurl.com/3kuavjwz>

8. A new documentary details plight of Crypto-Jews.

"Between the Stone and The Flower," directed by Cuban-born filmmaker Roberto Otero, premiered in June 2024. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-804339>

9. A search for a biological father, and the surprise of a lifetime.

A reporter does some digging to discover his true origins.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/a-search-for-a-biological-father-and-the-surprise-of-a-lifetime/ar-BB1ojEI3>

10. Ancestry.com is offering free access to their millions of their US occupation records in celebration of July 4th. Free access ends July 2nd.

<https://www.ancestry.com/c/ancestors-who-shaped-america>

11. MyHeritage Celebrates Canada Day Free Access to all Canadian Records thru 2 Jul 2024

MyHeritage has 183 collections with 105,446,567 records from Canada, including vital records, census records, immigration and passenger lists, military records, and newspapers.

<https://tinyurl.com/nhc8b3mh>



Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County (JGSCV)

A member of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) www.JGSCV.org

2024 Membership/Renewal Form

Dues paid now are good through December 2024

Date _____

Check one: This is a New Membership _____ . Renewal _____

Check one: Individual \$30.00 _____ or Family \$35.00 _____

Family is defined as two people living in the same household.

Name _____ Telephone (____) _____

Mailing Address

City _____ Zip _____ State _____

E-mail address _____

Talents that you might share with JGSCV (accounting skills, translation or language skills, (please specify) computer tech, library maven, greeter, other.)

Known areas of research? _____

Pay by:



PayPal to membership@jgscv.org and mail this form to

or

Check payable to JGSCV and mail it WITH this form to

Steve Feldman, *Membership*
1535 Rugby Circle
Thousand Oaks CA 91360

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Return or email this form to Steve Feldman membership@jgscv.org (address above)