

Venturing Into Our Past

JGSCV

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



November 2024

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NEXT MEETING

Sunday, November 17th, 2024

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

via **Zoom**

**"My Way:
A Family History Website"**

Presented by



Barbara Toby Stack

See page 3

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 enjoyed the September 29 meeting on the Jewish Orphans' Homes throughout the USA. Our presenter, Marlene Trestman, reviewed documents regarding these facilities nationwide as well the achievements of their graduates. It was an outstanding talk and if you would like to do further reading, you can purchase Marlene's book: "Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans." The homes exemplified the Jewish values of tzedakah and *tikkun olam* – charity and repairing the world. Please see the meeting summary on page 4.

We scheduled a viewing of the documentary movie Xueta Island. This film was available, on demand, to members, from Oct 18-20. It explored the fascinating legacy of the Xuetas (pronounced Chuetas): a unique group of families on the Balearic Island of Majorca who are believed to be descended from the island's Inquisition-era Jewish population. It is estimated that up to 20,000 Chuetas live on the island today. The film raised many issues including how we define a Jew in the aftermath of events like the Spanish Inquisition.

On Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 2 pm we will have Barbara Stack as our speaker on Zoom. She has been researching her family roots in Poland and Ukraine since the late 1980s, when she saw an enormous hand-written family tree made by her mother's cousin. She created a website which has become a great source of information for researchers, but also gives each of us a model of how we can optimally present our family information. This talk should be an inspiration to all genealogists. See page 3 for flyer.

Future meeting topics will include: **! ±@ŷ̂ @ŷ̂ " «°«a -; j -°i aŷ̂ 3 ŷ̂αflš™™ ««Sbinder on January 5, 2025.** This will be a hybrid available on Zoom and in—person at the T.O. Library Community Room. We will also have our annual party and gift drawing for 2025 members at this meeting.

Good news for our members! If you look at the membership form in the newsletter, you will notice that there is a reduction in dues for 2025. The JGSCV board of directors decided to reduce dues to \$25 individual and \$30 for family memberships. This was based on our lower expenditures this past year due to reduced travel costs for our programs. We also instituted PayPal to facilitate payment of membership dues. You can still pay by check or cash as explained on the form. Direct any membership questions to our Vice President of Membership, Steve Feldman at membership@jgscv.org. See renewal form on page 11.

You may have noticed some new genealogy programs at JGSCV. We have offered two on-demand movies for members and know that means many of you enjoyed watching in your pajamas and slippers while enjoying a cup of coffee or tea. These flexible viewings allow more members to participate. We are also working in collaboration with the Jewish Genealogy Society of Los Angeles (JGSLA). We have been invited to several of their meetings at no additional cost to our members. We in turn extended the offer for their members to attend select meetings of ours. We will continue to work with them and other genealogical societies.

We also continue to work with the Thousand Oaks library to shelve the books from our former traveling library, making them available during library hours. (The books were previously only seen at in-person meetings. We will also schedule training classes (at the TO Library) in how to use their genealogy databases and resources.

This month is the start of nominations for new members of the board of directors. If you are interested in joining the board, please submit your name to me at president@jgscv.org. We will also participate in the re-election process for board members who are completing their second year of service. Look for election details in future emails.

We want to provide programs to enhance the knowledge and research skills. Let me know presentation topics or resources you need, or that you recommend. I have gained much knowledge through JGSCV, and I hope that we can provide those same opportunities to you. Am Yisrael Chai!

**Issie Perel
JGSCV President**

MY WAY: A FAMILY HISTORY WEBSITE



with Barbara Toby Stack

NOVEMBER 17, 2024

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Zoom link sent out the Friday before the meeting

After years of genealogy research, Barbara concluded that a website was the best option for sharing her discoveries with relatives. This presentation isn't a do-it-yourself guide to creating a website, but instead a testimony to all that can be learned when making one and using the internet. Barbara was surprised by the results, not only in regard to her personal family history, but about genealogy itself. Her skills are basic, and she is excited to share the simple tools that enabled her to tell her family story on the web. As Barbara says, "*The secret sauce is the point of view.*"

Join us for what promises to be a informative and engaging talk.

Barbara Stack has been researching her family roots in Poland and Ukraine since the late 1980s, when she saw an enormous hand-written family tree made by her mother's cousin and bought her first computer. In late 2009, a mutual friend introduced Barbara to the LDS Family History Center in Oakland and to the San Francisco Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society (SFBAJGS). A website soon became necessary to organize and share the mounting piles of discoveries. In her professional life Barbara has been a systems analyst, a fiddler, a youth orchestra Executive Director, and most recently an archivist, editor, and writing coach. She is currently the Editor of the SFBAGS journal called ZichronNote.

Meetings are free for members.

For membership information, email: Steve@JGSCV.ORG

Marlene Trestman: “Jewish American Orphanage History”

By Andrea Massion

We welcomed Marlene Trestman to our Zoom meeting in September. Our members were fascinated by her extensive research on Jewish orphanages in the United States. A former Maryland Assistant Attorney General, Marlene had a remarkable law career and since retirement has authored two books that have a special connection with one another.



The latest, *Most Fortunate Unfortunates: The Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans* was published in 2023 and is based on her vast research of residents of this institution, their personal histories, as well as their descendants. The home was the first purpose-built Jewish orphanage in the nation. When it closed in 1946, it had cared for more than 1600 children. There is an impressive Online Supplement to *Most Fortunate Unfortunates* on Trestman's website that includes staff names, and some information about every child that passed through its care. (Go to <https://marlenetrestman.com/>.) Trestman's previous book was about Supreme Court advocate Bessie Margolin. And just how did Trestman come to specialize in a famed Southern lawyer? Her own website says it best:

<https://marlenetrestman.com>

“Orphaned at age 11, Marlene Trestman grew up in New Orleans as a beneficiary of the Jewish Children's Regional Service (JCRC), the social service agency that succeeded the Jewish Orphans' Home in which legal trailblazer Bessie Margolin grew up. Like Margolin, Trestman attended the Isidore Newman School, which the Home established to educate Jewish orphans alongside children from the community whose parents paid tuition.”

Trestman met the esteemed attorney in 1974 and later researched and wrote the book *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin*. (2016)

Bessie became her mentor. On the website, there is the letter to Bessie that served as an introduction to the young Marlene, just beginning college. Their connection came from both the New Orleans orphanage and the law.

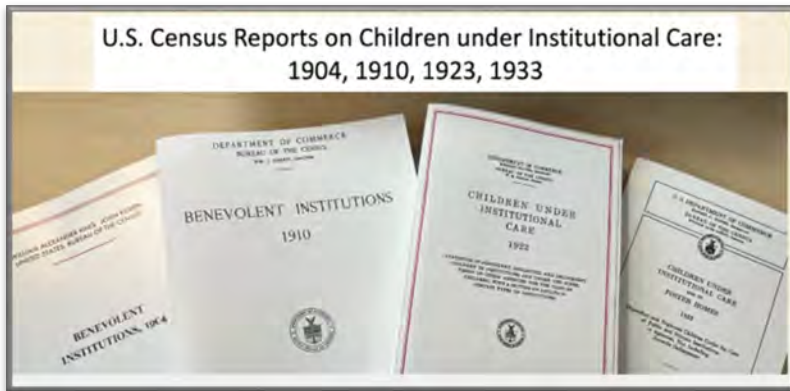
Trestman then shared the beginnings of homes for orphaned Jewish children. The American Civil War, the yellow fever epidemic and a rising Jewish immigration population spurred American Jewish communities to establish orphanages in the 19th century. Children with one living parent were also welcome.

The goal was to properly educate the children to become productive Jewish Americans. As stated at its 1891 dedication, Atlanta's Jewish orphanage served as *“a rebuke to our enemies and encouragement to our friends.”* Most of these residential asylums adhered to the Reform Judaism of that era. They sent their young residents to neighboring public schools and created technical schools in preparation for an independent adult life. However, some of the orphanages adhered to strict Orthodox practices. (See *article on page 8*). The existence of each type of institution reflects the practices of its immigrants, first Jews from German and later, Eastern Europe.



Bessie Margolin in 1913, and as Associate Solicitor of Labor, 1970. U.S. Labor Department.

Trestman cited the great social reformer, Rebecca Gratz, instrumental in serving the Jewish community in Pennsylvania to help needy families. In 1815, she helped found the *Philadelphia Orphan Society*, a non-sectarian group that provided shelter and education to orphaned children until they were old enough to be apprenticed to families. Gratz served as the society's secretary and advocate for forty years and is rumored to be the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's Rebecca in his novel "Ivanhoe." Recognizing the need to educate the city's parentless Jewish children in their religion, Gratz opened Philadelphia's Jewish Foster Home in 1855.



Marlene suggested the following research tips:

- U.S. Census Records can identify who lived in an orphanage by listing the inhabitants. ("inmates") and resident staffers. Census records of orphanages may also list the children's ages and places of birth.
- Historical Newspaper Sources: Marlene found articles as early as 1868 describing fund-raising events where children from the New Orleans orphanage performed. As late as the 1930s, photos of home supervisors and their charges evidenced the range of extra-curricular activities provided on site from orchestras to pet clubs.

- Institutional Records: Archived admission applications, annual reports, and alumni newsletters vary with institution. Check the region's archives, universities, and libraries to find available records.
- <https://marlenetrestman.com> : Marlene shares any sources she knows about on her extensive website.

Trestman included in her presentation the opening of the Southern Jewish Family Research Center at the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience in New Orleans next month. A special exhibit of Marlene's research on the Home is expected to launch at the MSJE in March 2025! A new research center? What a great reason for us Jewish Genealogists to visit NOLA!



Louis Volmer (left), director of the Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans

For further reading

Rebecca Gratz

- <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2013/07/rebecca-gratz.html>
- <https://jwa.org/womenofvalor/gratz>

Bessie Margolin

- <https://whatshernamepodcast.com/bessie-margolin/>
- <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/margolin-bessie>

"Orthodoxy as a Means of Becoming Good Jewish Americans: Two Jewish Orphanages in Chicago"

Constructing the Past: Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 9.

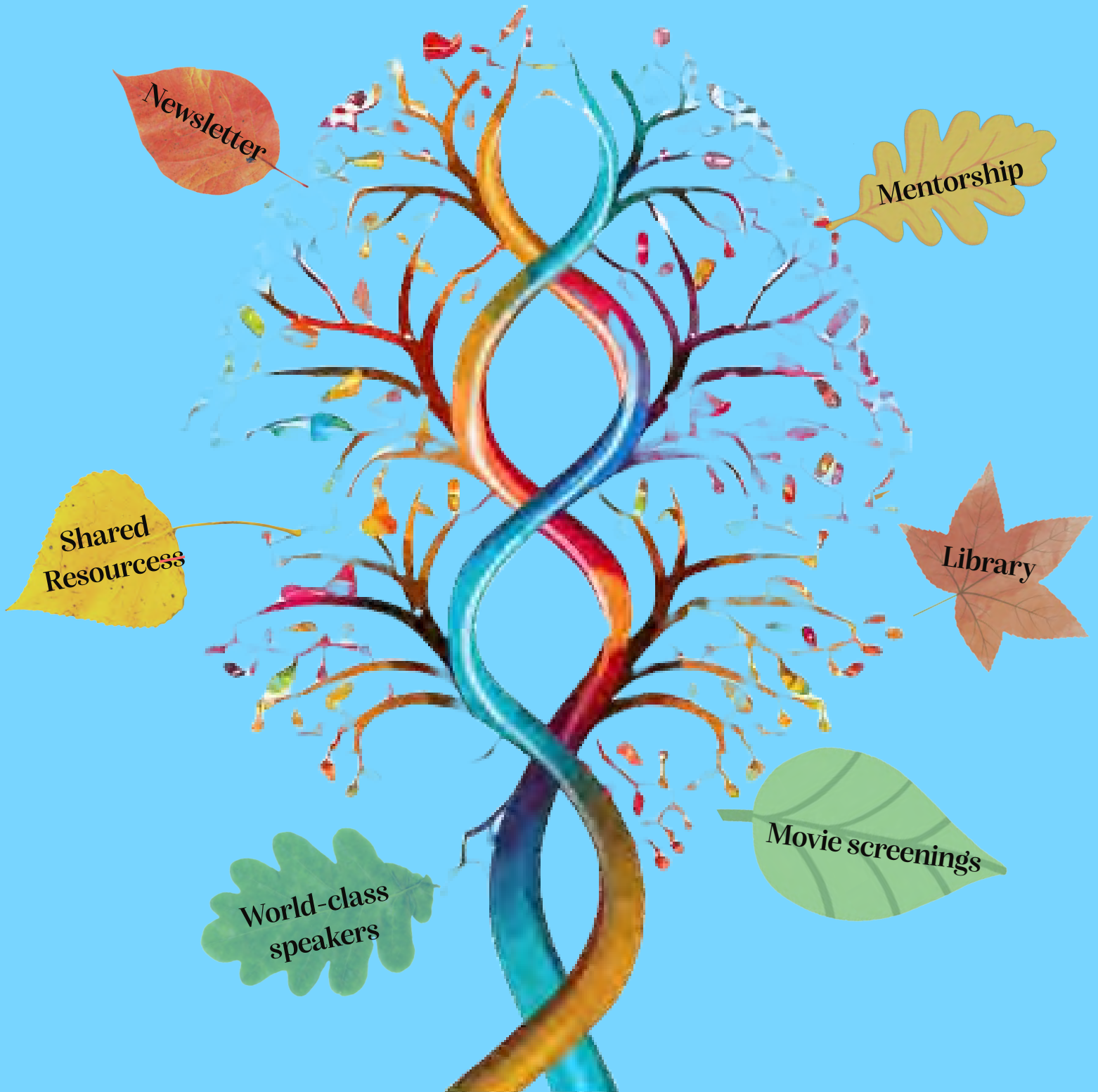
- <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/constructing/vol7/iss1/9>

Southern Jewish Family Research Center

- <https://msje.org/>

Time to Renew your

JGSCV Membership



Renew before the January 2025 meeting and be eligible for fabulous Hanukkah prizes.
Membership renewal form on page 11.

Practicing Safe Computing Article #106: “Your Password has Expired”

By Hal Bookbinder

Your UCLA password has expired. You must update it now.

Have you received notices that your password has expired or will shortly expire? These notifications claim to be from your employer, bank, brokerage, or even the government, and make it clear that action is required, or you will be locked out.

Don't fall for it. Invariably, these are bogus notices designed to steal your identity. Once you click on the link you will be asked to identify yourself by entering your current ID and password, along with the new password. It might even ask for additional information like your email and cell phone. The screen appears legitimate with appropriate wording, layout, and graphics for that institution.

Once you enter the information, it will display an error screen with something like, “We are unable to process your password reset at this time. Please try again later.”

You have just provided your ID and password to cyber criminals who will now use it themselves or sell it on the dark web. You should, of course, ignore and delete any such message that you receive. If you do fall for it, immediately go to the actual login site for the institution and update your password, before a cyber thief has the chance to use it.

Since we tend to reuse IDs and passwords, or variations of them, you must also log in to any other sites for which you use these, or similar credentials, and update them as well. I know of folks who repeatedly use the name of their dog, and simply append a number or a special character. (for example, Rover, Rover1, Rover2, Rover!, Rover1!, etc.).

Once the cyber criminal has a version of your password, they can use automation to try out variants on different sites, counting on the fact that many of us recycle them.

Legitimate institutions do sometimes require you to update your password. However, I have never heard of one sending out emails requiring you to do so. Rather, they will notify you once you actually log into their site that you must update your password and will typically take you directly to the security or profile page to do so.

While two-factor authentication does provide an extra level of security, and should be used where possible, any personal or credential information that cyber criminals are able to gather puts you at risk.

ON ANOTHER TOPIC

‘;--have i been pwned?’

My March 2024 article, [Data breach awareness](#) discussed the [Have I been Pwned?](#) website. This site will alert you when it finds your email or password on the dark web in a major data breach. I encourage you to avail yourselves of this valuable free service. I was just notified my information was included in a 9/28/2024 breach of over 31 million accounts from the Internet Archive. The faster you are aware of a breach that exposes your data, the quicker you can take action to protect yourself from cyber harm.

JGSCV founding member, Hal Bookbinder, 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 are available on the JGSCV website <https://www.jgscv.org/noteworthy.html>.

Genealogy Odds and Ends

- 1. Immigrant Memoir Meets Vaudeville Prose with American Jewish University's 2024 Word Grant Winner.**
An intimate and thought-provoking conversation with poet, performer, and essayist, Jake Marmer, winner of AJU's Bruce Geller Memorial Prize Word Grant
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5zs0qVhNFM&list=PLuQSpWj-yF2TNQOK7OPauBaMZuqGrzPjG&index=18>
- 2. The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) at American Ancestors is dedicated to preserving New England Jewish history, exploring Jewish heritage, and advancing understanding of the American Jewish experience for audiences of all backgrounds.** The JHC's archival collections specialize in Boston, Massachusetts, and New England Jewish history and contain more than four million documents:
<https://jewishheritagecenter.org/>
- 3. Are You Eligible for Up to \$10,000 from 23andMe's Data Breach Settlement?** Personal data of nearly half of the popular genetic testing company's customers -- 6.9 million people -- was exposed in the data breach.
<https://www.cnet.com/personal-finance/are-you-eligible-for-up-to-10000-from-23andmes-data-breach-settlement/>
- 4. Christopher Columbus and Jewish ancestry: An opinion piece by Devin Naar, the Isaac Alhadeff Professor in Sephardic Studies at the University of Washington.** He is descended from Greek Sephardic Jews who emigrated to the United States in the 1920s.
<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/debates-about-columbus-spanish-jewish-ancestry-are-not-new-the-claim-was-once-a-bid-for-social-acceptance/ar-AA1sVhaS>
- 5. A reunion project for Holocaust survivors and their families runs a race against time.** The Nazis destroyed families and their histories — a pair of genealogists is trying to put the pieces back together:
<https://forward.com/culture/664945/holocaust-reunion-project-jewish-survivors-jennifer-mendelsohn-adina-newman/>
- 6. A World of Jewish Farming: Jewish Agriculturalism in the Russian Empire, USSR & Bessarabia 1807 to 1917:**
<https://sites.rutgers.edu/jewish-agriculture/a-world-of-jewish-farming/the-russian-empire-ussr-bessarabia/>
- 7. Israel's rich biblical history can be found in the country's archaeology.** The Jerusalem Post shares the latest on archaeological excavations at significant biblical and historical sites in Israel and beyond.
<https://www.jpost.com/archaeology>
- 8. Have you considered hiring a professional genealogist? Genealogists Recommended by JewishGen Users:**
<https://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/researchers.htm>
- 9. Check out the Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA), the largest genealogy society in Israel. As of October 2024, IGRA added 10 new databases and over 28,000 records.**
<https://genealogy.org.il/>
- 10. For nearly 100 years, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research has preserved the legacy of one thousand years of Ashkenazi Jewish life.**
YIVO is approaching our Centennial Anniversary: <https://yivo.org/Centennial>
YIVO-Bard Winter Program on Ashkenazi Civilization – Jan 2025: <https://yivo.org/Winter-Program>
YIVO Interactive Journey through Jewish History of Eastern Europe: <https://museum.yivo.org/>

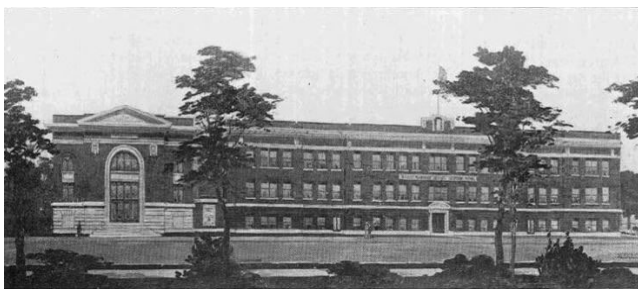
Marks Nathan Orphan Home: My cousin William Rodick's story

By Steve Feldman

It was very interesting to hear about the Jewish Orphans' Home of New Orleans. This story really struck a chord with me: a close relative I never met had a story involving a Jewish orphanage.

I first learned of this story when I met my cousin, Ben, through Ancestry. He shared the tale of a relative that died in a cable car accident in San Francisco but didn't know any details. After doing some genealogical research, I found out that the unfortunate death was that of my second cousin, Morris Rodick. Morris was the conductor of a cable car that hit a car on the tracks on Christmas Day in 1925. He died from the accident at the tender age of 25.

Morris' son, William, was just three years old and living in Chicago with his mother, Celia. She couldn't care for William, and so he was placed in the Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home. The orphanage was supported by many orthodox Jews and of course had a kosher kitchen.



Marks Nathan Orphan Home

According to the article in the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois website:

The Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home opened at 1243 North Woods Street (pre-1909 address: 592-598 Wood Street or 1741 Blucher Street) on May 13, 1906 with 29 children, according to a 2006 report, "Orthodoxy as a Means of Becoming Good Jewish Americans: Two Jewish Orphanages in Chicago". It was started by

businessman Marks Nathan, who left \$15,000 in his will to create either an Orthodox hospital or orphanage. The organization soon realized that they would need a larger building to meet the needs of the community, and in 1912 moved to a 300-bed facility at 1550 South Albany in the Lawndale community. This facility... opened on November 17, 1912 with 186 children. For more than 40 years, it served as "a refuge for Jewish children whom life had handed a lousy deal," according to a Tribune report on a 1992 reunion of former residents. The home had many residents who would later become famous, including lawyer and civil rights activist Elmer Gertz, professional boxer Barney Ross, and American sportswriter Jerome Holtzman. The home closed in 1948.

It appears William lived in the orphanage for 15 years. The 1940 census listed him as a 17-year-old "inmate" at its address. William's June 27, 1942 WW II Draft card Registration states he was a 19 year-old living in Chicago (not in the orphanage) and working at a Sears Roebuck warehouse.

Of course, I never met my cousin William Rodick, but I did meet his sons, Marty and Lawrence. Lawrence and I spent some good times together before he passed last year.

Marty said his dad didn't really talk about being raised in the Marks Nathan Home, and it seems William turned out well despite his upbringing.

Lawrence did mention his dad saying that Jewish kids were taunted by the gentile ones as they walked home from public school. William spent most of his life in Orange County and passed at the age of 79 in 2002 in Las Vegas.



Cousin William Rodick with his spouse

Jewish Gen KehilaLinks

By Hal Bookbinder

“Kehila” translates as “community” and the KehilaLinks are a valuable resource to be found on JewishGen. KehilaLinks pages bring together diverse information about specific towns in Europe and provide one stop to learn about your family’s ancestral town.

My Bookbinders came from Dubno, a town that is in historic Volhynia and is currently in northwestern Ukraine. I serve as the town leader for Dubno and recently published its KehilaLinks’ pages. They can be accessed at: <https://sites.google.com/jewishgen.org/dubno>. It includes pages on Dubno geography, history, famous people, links to database resources, its (former) Jewish cemetery, Holocaust information, maps and photos. Please check it out.

Town leaders are volunteers, and the information varies for each town based on what is available and what could be gathered and published by the respective town leader. If you search and find that there are no KehilaLinks pages for your town, consider becoming a volunteer and gathering information to assist others. I am certain that, in the process, you will learn more about your town and your own heritage.

You need not be a JewishGen member to access the KehilaLinks pages. However, being a member may be necessary to follow links to JewishGen databases from a KehilaLinks page. Although JewishGen will remind you about the importance of your donations, it costs nothing to join JewishGen nor to access any of its databases, although some enhanced searching facilities are only available to those who donate \$100 or more for the year.

To see if there are KehilaLinks pages for your town, do the following:

1. Go to <https://www.jewishgen.org>
Hint: You can join JewishGen from this page by clicking on the Login link at the top-right corner of the page.
2. Select the “Discover” drop down and click on “KehilaLinks”
3. Select the region of interest. For Dubno, you would select “Ukraine”.
Hint 1: Links are available on this page to learn more about KehilaLinks and for information about becoming a town leader.
Hint 2: As borders have changed over time, you may want to check other adjacent regions which might cover your town if you do not find it in the first region accessed.
4. Search the displayed list for the name of your town and select it.
5. This will take you to the first KehilaLinks page for the town.

Each KehilaLinks page includes contact information for the volunteer town leader responsible for its pages. If you have a question or suggestion, consider reaching out to the town leader who serves as an information focal point for that town. KehilaLinks pages cover thousands of our ancestral towns. The JewishGen Ukraine Research Division alone lists 464 towns with KehilaLinks pages.

Note: I serve on the JewishGen Ukraine Research Division Board of Directors. So, if you have suggestions for the Ukraine Research Division overall, please feel free to reach out to me.



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

2025 Membership/Renewal Form

Dues paid now are good through December 2025

Date _____

Check one: This is a New Membership_____. Renewal_____

Check one: Individual \$25.00_____ or Family \$30.00 _____

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)