



VENTURING INTO OUR PAST

NEWSLETTER OF THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF THE CONEJO VALLEY AND VENTURA COUNTY (JGSCV)

Volume 3, Issue 1

October 2007

BEGINNING OUR THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

President's Message

Hopefully you all had a good holiday period with family and friends and are well prepared for 5768. We are again poised to resume our monthly programming (see page 3).

During the middle of July, there was a meeting at the Goebel Senior Center in Thousand Oaks to address concerns that arose from a speech in June on the Holocaust, presented by a Goebel Center volunteer, himself a WWII veteran. The nature of the flier announcing the meeting and the presentation itself led to major concerns that the speaker was a Holocaust revisionist — which he denies. The July meeting, moderated by Temple Adat Elohim's Rabbi Riter, was a response by the community to voice their concerns about the unfortunate presentation in June. It also provided officials of the Conejo Recreation and Park District [CRPD], which operates the Goebel Senior Center, to apologize for any misunderstanding about the program and the misleading comments made by the speaker.

There will be two public meetings (3:30 PM and 7:00 PM) sponsored by the CRPD on Thursday, October 11 (located at 1385 East Janss Road in Thousand Oaks). The meeting is open for anyone who wishes to attend, with reservations and additional information available at 805 381 2744. The focus of this meeting is to educate the community about the Holocaust. A factual presentation will be given by survivor Elane Geller, who will be introduced by Rabbi Chaim Bryski of the Chabad of Thousand Oaks.

The JGSCV by-laws require a specific process for elections (see www.jgscv.org for a copy of the bylaws). Our 9-member board has staggered terms so that the entire board is not up for election at one time. Each term is for 2-years. This year 5 of the board member positions are up for election.

The process: The president appoints a nominating committee of three people by September of each year, which is approved by the board. The committee contacts all eligible society members inquiring if they wish to be considered for a board position. Those who complete the board application, are reviewed by the committee. The committee reports their recommendations at the October general meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the November general meeting. Any eligible member (a member in good standing for at least one year) may apply. The election is held at the general meeting in December. Our December newsletter (issued two weeks before the meeting) will list those who are running with a brief bio on each such candidate. If you want to get more active in your society this is the time! If you want to work on a committee rather than the board, please let me know, as there is a place for You!

We have started our membership renewal campaign this month (see page 4). Anyone renewing or joining, by or at our December 9 meeting, will be eligible for drawings of genealogical prizes to be awarded at that meeting. We need your membership dues to help with our programs and library purchases. The more members we have the stronger society we are.

Jan Meisels Allen

FOR SCHEDULE OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS, SEE PAGE 3

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CYCLE FOR 2008 BEGINS NOW, SEE PAGE 4

ABOUT JGSCV.....

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County meets once a month, usually on a Sunday. Meetings are oriented to the needs of the novice as well as the more experienced genealogist. Members share materials, research methods and ideas, as well as research success or failures. Members have access to the JGSCV library located on a special shelf at the Agoura Hills Public Library. Members also receive our monthly newsletter which is circulated by email.

2008 dues are \$25.00 for a single membership and \$30.00 for a household unit. To join, please send appropriate amount in check made out to JGSCV and addressed to Helene Rosen at 28912 Fountain wood St., Agoura Hills, CA 91301. Obtain new membership or renewal forms on our website at www.jgscv.org by selecting the membership button.

Remember, signing up beginning October 2007 provides membership valid for all of 2008.

NEW ONLINE JEWISH RESOURCES FROM FAMILYSEARCH

FamilySearch, the official site of the Mormon Church, announced the addition of three new resources to aid with Jewish genealogical research at the 27th International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies meeting in Salt Lake City:

- (1) Knowles Collection, containing information for thousands of Jews from the British Isles.
- (2) Finding Jewish Records, guide to tracing Jewish ancestors from the U.S. to Europe between 1850 to 1930.
- (3) Jewish Genealogy Research Outline (revised). Helpful guide to records and research strategies focusing on Jewish family history.

View these resources at: <http://tinyurl.com/2wzjh2>

INTERESTING AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

The website of the Spielberg Jewish Film Archive's virtual film project is online and provides about 400 films depicting the history of the Jewish people during the period before the Holocaust. All the films can be viewed free, at <http://w3.castup.net/spielberg/>.

The Judaica Sound Archives (JSA) is a major center for the collection, preservation and digitization of Judaica audio recordings. Housed in the Wimberly Library on Florida Atlantic University's Boca Raton campus, free access to the growing audio recordings is available at:

<http://faujsa.fau.edu/jsa/home.php>

UPDATE FROM JRI-POLAND, et al

The historic Warsaw Jewish Cemetery on Okopowa Street has been in continuous use since late in the 18th century and contains an estimated 250,000 individual graves as well as mass graves of thousands of residents of the Warsaw Ghetto. While most of the gravestones have survived, the cemetery burial records were destroyed by Nazi forces during the WW II occupation of Warsaw. Starting in October 2003, Przemyslaw Isroel Szpilman, the new Cemetery Manager, commenced an aggressive project with a goal of documenting all the gravestones and their locations in the shortest possible time. Using a digital camera provided by JRI-Poland, work has proceeded at a brisk pace and with the recent update to the JRI-Poland database there are now more than 41,000 burials listed. Information on this database and how to obtain photographs of tombstones can be found at the following link:

www.jri-poland.org/cemetery/warsaw_beisolam.htm

The Warsaw Cemetery also has a new website with a surname searchable database that is complementary to the JRI-Poland database. The search results sometimes include the photograph of the tombstone. The URL for their website is www.cemetery.jewish.org/pl/

Another aspect of Polish Jewish history can be gleaned from the slide show illustrated with photos from the book, "Image Before My Eyes, A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1939" By Lucjan Dobroszycki & Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, published by Schocken Books, New York, 1977.

Go to: <http://www.tachna.com/jlp/>

Finally, there is a unique website called Oneg Shabbat which furthers the Polish Jewish story even more:

http://www.archiwa.gov.pl/memory/sub_ringelblum/index.php?va_lang=en&fileid=001

This collection of documents assembled by the underground centre for research and documentation in the Warsaw Ghetto became known as the Ringelblum Archives. On November 22, 1940, a week after the Ghetto was sealed off, a group met in the home of Emanuel Ringelblum at 18 Leszno Street. That meeting set the agenda for a co-operative project to create a comprehensive record of the history of the Jews under Nazi occupation. Later, the Main Judaic Library (now the Jewish Historical Institute) where official Jewish charitable organisations had their offices until April 1942, was also used as a meeting place. Presumably, meetings took place on Saturday evenings, hence the group's code name - Oneg Shabbat.

More than 35,000 pictures of pre-WWII Poland, are available at <http://www.bagnowka.com>. The site includes images of more than 100 pre-war and 200 contemporary Jewish cemeteries.

Learn How to Use the Resources at the Family History Centers

Come to the Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County*

(* and surrounding areas)

Sunday, October 14, 2007 2:00 p.m. — 4:00 p.m.

at Temple Adat Elohim

2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

"How To Begin Your Genealogy Research-Part IV"

(It is not necessary to have attended Parts I, II or III to understand or learn from Part IV)

Millions of European Jewish records from the 19th century (and before) have been microfilmed by the Mormon Church and are available through Family History Centers (FHC). In addition, millions of American records including census, draft registration records, birth, marriage and death records have been microfilmed. The FHCs also offer free on-line access to many databases useful for family research. There are small FHCs in Newbury Park, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks & Ventura and other cities in our area, as well as the regional center in Los Angeles. Learn how to find out what records are available on-line, how to order films and how to use the information in tracing your family.

JGSCV Board members, Debra Kay Blatt and Warren Blatt, editor-in-chief and vice president of JewishGen.org will lead the discussion.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of the Conejo Valley and Ventura County is dedicated to sharing genealogical information, techniques and research tools with anyone interested in Jewish genealogy and family history.

Meeting co-sponsored with Temple Adat Elohim

There is no charge to attend the meeting. Anyone may join JGSCV.

For more information contact information@JGSCV.org

See: www.JGSCV.org or call Jan Meisels Allen @ 818-889-6616

Future JGSCV Meeting Dates

All Meetings are held at Temple Adat Elohim
2420 E. Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks

November 11, 2007, "How the Jews Won the West: How the Documentation of Western Jewish History Began, and Why is This Such a Hot Topic Today," presented by Gladys Sturman

December 9, 2007, "Using the Internet beyond JewishGen and the Steve Morse Website," presented by Ron Arons

January 6, 2008, "Documenting Immigrants to America: 1882-1954," presented by Marian Smith

February 10, 2008, "Using Maps in Genealogical Research," presented by Robert Sherins, MD

March 2, 2008, "100 years of the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring," presented by Eric Gordon

Subsequent meetings in 2008: Apr 6, May 4, Jun 1

PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE AND SUBMIT TO THE TREASURER

2008 Membership Renewal Form

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

2008 Annual Dues:

Dues paid now are good through December 2008!

Check one:

Single \$ 25.00 _____ + \$1.00** Family* \$30.00 _____ + \$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 \$ _____

(suggested minimum voluntary contribution for either fund \$5.00)

Make check out to: JGSCV

Mail to: Helene Rosen
28912 Fountainwood st.
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Name (Print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

Day telephone _____ Evening telephone _____

E-mail address _____

(This is very important as all communication is done by e-mail!)

REMINDER TO REGISTER

Ralphs Community Contribution Program will support JGSCV through your purchases of goods at Ralphs markets, and at no cost to you. Please register for this community outreach program by following the steps outlined on our website: www.jgscv.org and click on "notices."

Now whenever you shop at Ralphs, JGSCV will receive a percentage of what you spend.

EXPLORING JEWISH FAMILY RECORDS IN THE USA

More than often our genealogical research is focused on finding family records in overseas locations. But, what can we do about researching our ancestors right here in the good old USA? The right place to start this endeavor is, of course, the public records, such as arrival manifests, naturalization applications and certificates, social security files, census reports and the usual birth, marriage and death records.

But, there are also some unique Jewish sources which may shed light on one's family history. Examples are records available at synagogues and Jewish cemeteries or by local Jewish mortuaries. Consider the information that can be readily obtained from the Waldheim Cemetery located in the suburbs of Chicago. Waldheim is one of the premier and oldest Jewish cemeteries in the greater Chicago area, where the first burial occurred in 1873. In over 200 acres, some 150,000 Jews are buried and can be identified by access to the website: www.waldheimcemetery.com/default.asp



The Waldheim website provides two online options, one to locate a family grave and a second to update a cemetery record. In both cases, a form is provided which must be duly filled in and then transmitted by email (or printed for later faxing or mailing). Response by email is promised within 3-5 days. What could be more efficient and helpful?

I had a different experience in seeking a burial plot at the Mt. Sinai Memorial Park in Hollywood Hills where there was no recourse to online query but required a visit to the cemetery. Upon identifying the deceased, I was promptly provided with the necessary information to find the burial plot. However, privacy policies prohibited the cemetery in giving me information concerning next of kin. They were willing to contact such individuals and provide them my identity, leaving it to them to respond to me at their discretion.

Jewish mortuaries and synagogues typically provide Yahrzeit announcements as an annual service to families with a connection to the deceased. One might try access to such organizations for data concerning death date, possibly an obituary, or information on next-of-kin.

TO BE CONTINUED

Werner L. Frank

- We welcome contributions from our members regarding their genealogical research experience. Submit your story to this Newsletter at newslettereditor@jgscv.org.

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