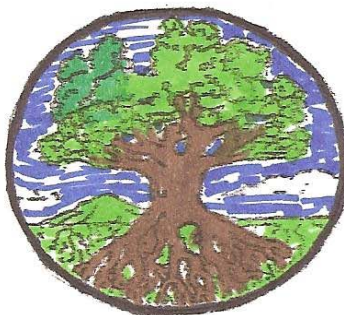


SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 305

Diablo, CA 94528-8308

President: Patty Erickson

Coord. Editor: Dorothy Baker

Meetings: 10:00 a.m.

3rd Tuesday of the Month

(Except August & December)

Alamo LDS Church

Stone Valley & Smith Rds., Alamo

San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society

Vol. XXII No. 7 February - 2007

♥ **THIS MONTH - February 20, 2007** ♥
"Information Landslide."

Bob Dougherty will be our speaker this month. Bob is one of our SRVGS members and is currently on the Program Committee. Two years ago Bob gave a presentation entitled "Genealogy In The DIGITAL WORLD." At that time he showed examples of available tools and assets that were changing the way in which we could approach our Genealogical challenges. He told us that we could expect improvements in the intervening years. Indeed, in the last two years we have been overwhelmed !!! Bob will attempt to update our view of genealogy in the current digital world. The title of Bob's presentation will be "Information Landslide."

∞ **JANUARY MEETING** ∞
"Land and Property Research"
Speaker: Vera Broyles Reported by: Lee Schlenker

Land and Property Research has been Vera Broyles passion for approximately 25 years. She has been researching genealogy for some 35 years. She is on staff at the Oakland Family History Center. She also does trips to the Salt Lake City Family History Library. Vera has researched in Austria and Hungary for her family roots.

Vera lost both her parents at a very young age and never had the opportunity to ask those pertinent question as to family origin. She didn't realize how little she knew about her family until she went to fill out her son's project of a family tree. There wasn't much to fill out on her side of the tree!

By 1850, 90% of the adult males owned land in the U>S> Land records are the most complete records you will happen onto. There are "dowers rights" (which was 1/3 of the husbands estate) listed in land records. Land records can be reconstructed, should they be destroyed for some reason, because of their tax benefits to cities, counties and Federal. Deeds give you the grantor and the grantee. The "grantor" is the person giving it: the "grantee" is the person receiving it. Deeds are usually indexed by surnames - either by grantor or grantee. Quit Claim Deeds and Deed Releases are types of conveyance used to transfer property and names will appear. Deeds provide proof of residence for a period of time. The deed gives you the property address and description. And from there you can locate the nearest church (for religious purposes) and the nearest counties for further information on your relatives or your relatives neighbors.

It just takes time and digging. To start - you'll need to know if your ancestor owned land. That can be found usually on any of the U.S. census. Start with the latest census and work backwards checking the "own" column in each. Often times the value of the land will be list too. Then you'll know where it start your search.

Land records started basically within Virginia and the original 13 colonies. All through the 1700s there were many wars – King George War, French/Indian War, Dunmore's War and the Revolutionary War (you can find information on these in many databases - Google is a good source). After the wars Bounty Land Warrants were issued and the number of acres a soldier received depended on his rank - the higher the rank the more acreage. Often time, the service man was given a Land Warrant. He would then turn around and sell his Warrant to somebody else. There are also records found under the Spanish Land Grants: France held AR, CO, IA, MI, MO, MT land at one time' Mexico held TX, LA, CA, UT, NV, NM, AZ at one time. In 1820, Mexico held Texas and cotton was prevalent there. Americans had to give up their U.S. citizenship to stay in Texas and farm the cotton; so many of them did just that. When they returned to the States they had to reapply for their citizenship.

You can write for land records to receive a copy of the original document, but if you go on land (www.USGLO.gov) you may find even more information by going onto the next page after you've read to the bottom of the first document.

Bureau of Land Management is also on line (www.BLMGLO.gov) for information. They acquired 200 million acres east of the Mississippi River to be given to soldiers. The BLM used a grid system to organize a town. Each town was a 36 square mile tract with no smaller than 640 acres. Each township plat was numbered. And in most tracts section #16 became the maintenance and schools area. Public Domain Lands were northwest of the Ohio River. The Mining Act of 1866 was generated and the mineral rights on Public Domain lands could be explored for a fee of \$5.00 per acre. People started subdividing their land. Land patents were issued in most of the West and in the Plains states.

By 1848, the California gold rush hit and people came West. Miners needed to lay claim to the land but didn't want to leave their valuable land just to register their plot, so much of it was only written down in a diary or on a piece of paper listing boundaries. 1862 brought the Homestead Act where the head of household being 21 years of age, male or female, and having proof of being a U.S. citizen could homestead 160 acres. All these parcels of land

had to be registered in Washington D.C. and without "express mail" things moved very, very slowly. It took months to years to get it all registered.

Vera had some helpful hints to pass on:

- 1) Create a tight timeline for your ancestor to help narrow down your land records search,
- 2) Make a list of your surname misspelled every-which-way you can think up (keep it with you while searching) as a quick reference; the same with neighbors names.
- 3) When reading plat maps bring your magnifying glass, some strong coffee and lots of time for the long search. They can be difficult to read.

Sources to check into: National Archives (NARA) for military records; prior to WWI call NARA and ask because there are different areas for different war records. Topographical maps are good for reasoning on the "whys" things happened (floods by creeks, landslides, etc.) Websites: Ehow.com, Reverserecords.org. CAArchives CALand/records.com Google (Vera's best source) Cyndi's List. Library of Congress.

Genealogists don't die, they just lose their census.

I'd rather look for dead people than have them look for me.

I trace my family history so I will know who to blame me.

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

President:

Patty Erickson 925-229-0889
Email: russpat@comcast.net

1st V.P.

Barbara Dittig 925-648-9364

2nd V.P. Program:

Bob Dougherty 925-556-3302
Kathy Javdani 925-736-5464

3rd V.P. Membership:

Ileen Peterson 510-651-7728
Email: ileenpeterson@comcast.net

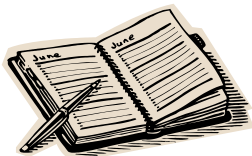
Recording Secretary: Carol Huvane 925-947-5669

Corresponding Secretary:

Sandra Burns 925-648-4653

Treasurer: Ed Mason 925-838-7848

Parliamentarian: Virginia Rood 925-937-8659



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR FEBRUARY 2007

- 6** Tuesday – 10:00 am. The Board Meeting
was held at the home of Lee Schlenker
- 20** Tuesday – 10:00 am. The General Meeting
will be held at the LDS Church on Stone Valley Road
at Smith Road, in Alamo.

SRVGS CALENDAR MARCH 2007

- 6** Tuesday – 10:00 am. The Board Meeting
will be held at the home of Sandra Burns in
Danville
- 20** Tuesday – 10:00 am. The General Meeting
will be held at the LDS Church on Stone
Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo. From
I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east
2 & 1/2 miles.

SRVGS Special Interest Groups FEBRUARY 2007

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP (The Master Genealogist) -- This is a genealogy software users group for PC's with their focus on the use of The Master Genealogist. This group will meet Tuesday February 20th, after the general meeting at about 12:30 pm. at the home of Bruce Garner in Danville. Bring a bag lunch. His home phone is 837-9285. Peggy Dearman is the contact person for the group. Phone 837-1621 or e-mail pdearman@earthlink.net.

GERMAN – On Wednesday February 28th (the fourth Wednesday) the German Group will meet at the home of Margaret Koenig in Lafayette at 10 am. Fran Schweitzer is the contact person for the group; Phone 935-5744 or e-mail franschw@pacbell.net. Please contact Fran Schweitzer for further details or to let it be known that you do not plan to attend.

IRISH – This special interest group will meet February 14th (the second Wednesday) at 10:00 am. at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net for further information.

SOUTHERN – This group will meet February 13th (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 am. at the home of Dorothy Stanton in Danville. They also plan to meet on March 13th at the home of Suzanne Johnston in Danville. The contact person is Dorothy Stanton; Phone 820-3757 or email dpstant@hotmail.com. New persons interested in attending should contact Dorothy Stanton for information.

INTERNET INTEREST GROUP VIA EMAIL – Interested members communicate and receive email messages via the address network established by Jack Johnson, group coordinator. This group does not otherwise get together for meetings on a regular basis. Their purpose is more to alert it's participants to useful genealogical sites on the Web. Receiving a message from someone in this group allows a group member to communicate with ALL group members by saving a current message and sending a reply to ALL. Member Internet/e-mail users may join this group by sending an email request to jackmj@earthlink.net. Please use "SRVGS Internet User" as a subject line.

NEWS VIA EMAIL -

Ed Mason is the coordinator for an additional method to improve the timeliness and frequency of communication by emails. The purpose of this general email is simply a way to extend our group communication ability beyond the monthly newsletter. He keeps an email address list of members. He will distribute messages a minimum of once a month. Members wishing to share news may send it to Ed. If it is deemed appropriate, it will be distributed. Members will always have the option to Opt-Out. Notify Ed Mason at: edmason@sbcglobal.net

San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society Website

Have you visited our very own website?
It is <http://srvgensoc.org/index.html> .

The site contains a wealth of finger tip information. You can learn about our meetings, membership in SRVGS, plus the membership application, our history, contact information of board members, special interest group meeting dates, past newsletters (downloads), and libraries in our area.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

- 13 February Tuesday 7:30 pm**
The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society will have its regular meeting at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. "My Trip to Germany" will be the subject of a presentation by Chuck Weidel.
- 13 March Tuesday 7:30 pm**
Anne Homan, a L-AGS member will make a presentation about her new book, "Livermore A to Z".
- 27 February Tuesday 1:00 pm**
The Sacramento German Genealogical Society will have one of its regular meetings at St. Mark's Methodist Church, Lusk Drive and St. Mark's Way in Sacramento. Ingeborg Carpenter will speak about "Why do Germans Act and Think as They Do"



CONTINUING EDUCATION

The following classes will be held at the Family History Center, 4766 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland, CA during the month of February:

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF FAMILY SEARCH Saturday, February 24 at 2:00 p.m.
Instructor, Bill Slocum

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ANCESTRY.COM
Wednesday, February 28 at 7:00 p.m. Instructor, Joanne Gardner

Call (510) 531-3905 or e-mail fhcoakland@yahoo.com to sign up for classes. There is no charge to attend but a nominal fee is charged to cover the cost of handouts. Be sure to check the schedule for an update of additional classes being offered.

To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain perpetually a child. For what is the worth of a human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?

- Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 B.C.

President's Message By Patty Erickson



Many thanks to Barbara Dittig, our first vice-president, for taking over both the January Board meeting and the General Meeting. Grandchildren give us more than hugs and kisses!

It is imperative that we have your help in forming a nominating committee. It is imperative that we have your help in stepping forward to become a board member. We need FIVE new board members this year: President, vice-president, one program chairperson, membership chairperson, and treasurer.

I am not surprised that Barbara Dittig is not taking over the presidency. Barbara has been first vice-president twice and president in 2002-2003. Why should she have to be president a second time so soon? Barbara and Lucy Carver have been in charge of folding, stapling, labeling and mailing our newsletters for over ten years. Barbara was also chairperson of the MAC interest group. Do you remember that far back?

Have you personally been a board member of our society? Have you experienced taking part, working with other members, getting to know people better, and helping make our society experience more meaningful and rewarding for all? Some have said we "could use new blood on the board". You are the new name and face that could be the "new blood on the board". The "new blood" to keep our society alive and functioning for the coming year and for many years. Please consider: could you step forward to fill these needs?

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Coordinator: Dorothy Baker 925-952-9691
Email: DJDorothy@comcast.net

Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke 925-828-8570
Email: v.m.seg3@sbcglobal.net

Mailing: Lucy Carver 925-837-3146

Deadline to put information in the Newsletter is the Last Thursday of the month.

Member are encourage to submit articles for the Newsletter by mail or email to Coordinator.



Your Society Needs You

Our Society recently received the following article from the California State Genealogical Alliance. I would like to share it with you.

SOCIETY BURNOUT – AN ALL-TOO-REAL PROBLEM

By Lisa B. Lee, President

California State Genealogical Alliance

My Lee ancestors were Canadian and with the help of the Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS), I've been able to trace that line all the way back to my grandfather's grandfather's grandfather, a black man named William Lee who came to Ontario in the mid 1770's and fought as a Loyalist in the Revolutionary War.

The tireless efforts of the OGS volunteers to transcribe and repair headstones from long-abandoned negro cemeteries is something I find difficult to even find words for expressing my gratitude. Had it not been for their committed work over 30 years ago, these fleeting records of my ancestors would have been forever lost. Thank you, Ontario Genealogical Society.

I was shocked and saddened when I received their latest newsletter, "Traces and Tracks," and read the painful letter to all members informing us that the Wellington County Branch, OGS has begun a process which could lead to its dissolution.

Why, after decades of unparalleled service to the genealogical community, are they planning to dissolve? The short answer – member burnout.

The letter went on to say, "... in recent years we have not had enough members who were willing to take on leadership positions.... Most of our active members have served in these positions [chair, vice-chair, secretary, some committee chairs] and are unwilling to do so again for good reasons.

Our financial position is very solid, so money is not an issue. However, we must have people who are willing to assume these executive positions if we are to continue."

Oh, how I'd love to help them, to try to repay, in some small way, the kindness their volunteers have

shown to so many, but I'm over 3,000 miles away. As I ponder the possible doom of this worthy organization, I'm afraid to see the parallels between their situation and that of other societies in our area. So many stories might never have been told had it not been for the local genealogical societies and their dedicated volunteers.

Each time I look at my plate and the commitments I have to my family, my son's school, my job, the various societies to which I belong, my genealogical clients, my own health (I'm 50 now, and the ol' gal is starting to show signs of ear and tear), my home (built in 1928, also starting to show signs of wear and tear), etc., I often wonder how I can find the time, energy and strength to deal with what I already juggle, much less add anything else to the list.

But how can I not?

This whole business of genealogy is not something I chose to do, and I'm sure that many of you feel the same way. We're driven, for better or for worse, to dig, and find, and snoop, and ferret out every least piece of information about lives long gone, just so that they won't be forgotten.

The work our societies do is so utterly important to this task, and I ask you to think about how it was when **you** first started researching your family. How easy would it have been had it not been for a friendly face or voice at a local or distant genealogical society? Could you have weathered the storm with their support and guidance?

The internet can't do it all and contrary to popular belief, Ancestry.com cannot provide all the answers.

We need societies now more than ever, and we need YOU more than ever.

When I first started doing genealogy in 1970, in many ways, I was lucky because the internet wasn't around. I had to do things the old-fashioned way, actually talking to living relatives, writing letters, visiting county courthouses, traipsing through cemeteries, etc. I earned my stripes.

But for those starting out today, the information overload more often results in intimidating potential genealogists to the point that they simply give up, having no idea how to make sense of the tens of thousands of search results received for even the most innocent of requests.

For the sake of the ancestors, and for the stories yet to be told, I implore you to take time, to find the energy, to help your society continue to grow and thrive.

Being a society Chair or President, Secretary,

Parliamentarian, even Treasurer doesn't require a college degree, or a whole lot of time. Won't you please think about giving just a couple o hours a month to help keep the stories alive?

When I think about all the hardships my ancestors had to endure so that I could be here today – their resoluteness to never give up, to go on and build a life for their family – it is *their* stories that give me the strength to continue to volunteer so much of my time. And I'm sure it's the same for you.

There's a society out there that needs a fresh voice, new blood. I urge you to answer the call.

The above article is from the November-December 2006 issue of the California State Genealogical Alliance Newsletter. It is republished here with the permission of the Alliance.

THE SRVGS NEWSLETTER

As a member of SRVGS, you have a choice of how you would like to receive your monthly Newsletter - by snail mail or by email.

Did you know that 35% of our membership receive it by an email attachment. There are significant advantages in so doing, both to our Society and to the recipients. Of course, we save money on printing and postage. The advantages to you: 1. A much more handsome product. Larger type and now, COLOR 2. Helping to save our environment, fewer trees cut down, etc. 3. Easy access to saved copies without cluttering up your house.

You know now your snail mail Newsletter looks. If you would like to see an email Newsletter and what you have been missing, go to our website:

<http://srvgensoc.org/index.html>

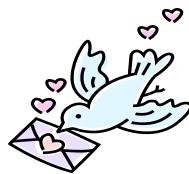
and click on Newsletter. If you like what you see, contact Ed Mason. edmason@sbcglobalnet.

He will then put you on the email Newsletter mailing list.

**"Why waste your money looking up your family tree?
Just go into politics and your opponents will do it for you!"
-- Mark Twain**

L-AGS Genealogical Seminar

L-AGS, in association with the Livermore LDS Church, is hosting a free genealogical seminar Saturday, April 21, 2007, featuring Stephen P. Morse, famed for his One-Step search engine, and Susan G. Johnston, L-AGS member and Los Positas College faculty member. Steve will present three different topics: "One-Step Web Pages - A Potpourri of Genealogical Search Tools," "Ellis Island Search," and "Playing Hide and Seek in the U.S. Census." Sue's topic is "Adventures in Source Citations." The date is firm, but details are still in the planning stages. More information will be coming soon.



Preserving Love Letters and Other Treasures

My very dear Sarah, The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days, perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more . . . I know but few and small claim upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me—perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little Edgar—that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name . . . But, O Sarah! If the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they loved. I shall always be near you; in the gladdest days and darkest nights, advised to your happiest scenes and gloomiest hours, always, always, and if there be a soft breeze upon your cheek, it shall be my breath; as the cool air fans your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit passing by. Sarah, do not mourn me dead, think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again.
—Sullivan

The above is excerpted from a letter written by a soldier who fought and died in the Battle of Bull Run—and to his descendants, it is a treasure beyond compare. Letters like this, and other papers like it,

create a vivid portrait of our ancestors. But without the proper care, they could be lost. This is also true of our own correspondence. (Don't our own descendants deserve some treasures too?) Below are some tips for keeping those old love letters, valentines from loved ones, family correspondence, and other paper items safe for future generations.

- Get (and keep) your treasures out of the attic, garage, basements, or other places where they can be exposed to dirt grime, insects, rodents, mold, and other document destroying forces of nature. Put them in archival quality sleeves to protect them from dust, moisture and pollutants in the air.
- Try not to handle them much, as the oils on your hands can also damage them.
- Don't use paper clips or rubber bands on your precious papers. The paper clips can rust, and rubber bands may melt (even at somewhat low temperatures) and leave stains.
- Store them in a climate-controlled place, preferably at a low temperature. Don't store them near outside walls, or near fireplaces where temperatures may be erratic. Regulating the humidity can help prevent mold, or conversely, the paper drying out and becoming brittle.
- Store the documents where light can't reach them. Light can cause paper to yellow and ink to fade. Ultraviolet rays from sunlight or fluorescent lights can also cause invisible chemical reactions that may further damage the documents.
- For extremely valuable documents, you may want to store them in a safe-deposit box. This can save them from fires, floods, or other disasters that may occur.
- Photocopy documents on acid-free, alkaline-buffered paper to preserve what is written on the document. You may also want to transcribe the document, but if you use a computer, keep in mind that hard drives may crash, disks can be erased or damaged, and the formats of today may be unreadable in a few years. Always keep hard copies of transcribed documents in several safe places in case of one of these technological problems arise.

With a little time and thought you can preserve your family's treasures for generations to come. For more information on preserving documents, photos, sound recordings, computer disks, and textiles, read Barbara Sagraves' book [*A Preservation Guide: Saving the Present for the Future*](#) (Salt Lake City, UT: Ancestry, 1995)

Ancestry Daily News
2/16/1999 - [Archive](#)

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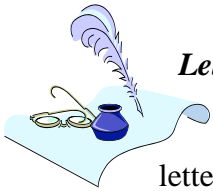
Cut and Paste Those E-Mails

Old fashioned letter writing is, sadly, almost a thing of the past. What will we leave our descendents that is similar to our treasured old letters?

I have learned to cut and paste my relative's e-mails into my Family Tree Maker notes. For instance, when I e-mail old Aunt "Jane" and ask her specific questions about her husband fighting in WWII or a something specific about her other relatives, her e-mail response is a valuable source for information.

In my Family Tree Maker, I pull up the individual she has written about and make a note: "From an e-mail dated (insert e-mail date), from Aunt Jane Doe-Smith". I then cut and paste her e-mail in that person's notes. If she has written about more than one person, I cut and paste the portions she has written about each one and put the e-mail into each person's notes.

E-mails are definitely not as personable as the old letters we have, but don't forget that they can also hold some wonderful memories, facts, and clues! Don't forget to date them and use them as a source!
Ancestry Daily News - Quick Tip By Lisa Bass
2/16/1999 - [Archive](#)



Letter to the Ancestry Editor, Juliana Smith

My family recently cleaned out my ninety-five-year-old grandmother's house. (She is in a nursing home and will not be coming back.) We found ten or fifteen shoeboxes full of cards and letters from family members, some dating back to the 1940s. It appears that she kept each card that had a note written in it and all of her letters. Some of these still had photos in them! My father and I had a wonderful time reading about distant family members and their families. We also gleaned a lot of genealogy information from them that we might have never found. In addition, I now feel like I know many of my relatives that died before I was born.

The reason I am writing this e-mail is to suggest that families continue to write letters and to write notes in cards. In this age of e-mail and telephones, letters are becoming obsolete. Personally, I do not write many letters, and I have been ordering Christmas cards with our name imprinted inside and using address labels to mail them. After looking through my grandmother's stash of letters I have decided to start back to writing letters and notes in my personalized cards (although I may still use address labels). Cards and letters give so much information for future generations. I am not an advocate of keeping trash, but I feel that letters are not trash. They are as valuable as books and much more personal! If the current trends of electronic communication continue, future generations will miss out on so much! Shoeboxes seemed to be the perfect size for my grandmother's cards and letters and I think I will keep mine in the same! I plan to cover mine with contact paper and to label the ends with years as I fill up each one.

Please urge your readers to continue to write letters! We don't want to lose personal information on this generation!

Sincerely, Sandy Forrester Olson

Ancestry Daily News

11/1/1999 - [Archive](#)

San Ramon Valley
Genealogical Society
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FIRST CLASS MAIL