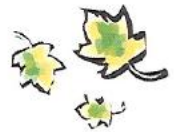




San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society



www.srvgensoc.org

Celebrating 25 Years!

San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society

Vol. XXV No. 6 January - 2010



THIS MONTH – January 19, 2010
"Finding Your English Ancestors"
Presented by: Suzanne Johnston



Suzanne will demonstrate where and how to research our English Ancestors: what to check first in the US and British Isles, as well as using internet sources. She also clarifies the differences in researching English records prior to 1837, and 1837 to present.

Suzanne first got hooked on genealogy while researching family from the Isle of Man with her mother when she was 12 years old. She was taught to copy by hand what she found in LDS microfiche parish registers (then the only way); later at home she would match her finds to names in families they already had, very gratifying.

Suzanne has taught various adult education genealogy classes, including at Chabot College where *The Hayward Area Genealogy Society (HAGS)* was created from that class. She has led family tours to Scotland and participated in many enlightening and spiritual family adventures to England and Scotland.

November Meeting

"What is New, Recovered, and Too Long Ignored in German Family History"

Speakers: Shirley Riemer Reporter: Lee Schlenker

This little "slip" of a lady had such a sense of humor she made her talk even more enjoyable. Shirley Riemer's extensive biography can be found in the November Newsletter. She has written several books, is editor for *Der Blumenbaum*, and just completed her 40th trip to Germany. She also had a great handout of five pages with places to find and locate information. Listed were 64 places in which to search from your home, 18 places to trek off to for your U.S. hometown (a 1 to 2 week stay is good), and 14 places to check when you visit the German hometown. This handout was delivered online to anyone who has signed up for internet info from our genealogy society.

Shirley started off by telling us that she was here to debunk some of the myths and fairytales about German research and Germany; but she wasn't going to solve all problems you might have.

First off, you must remember that Germany was not a unified Germany; it was made up of very little places (which we now can call states of Germany). The word "klein" means small and the word "staate" means state; so kleinstaaterei was once upon a time Germany. Germany isn't as old as the United States. The war in 1871 was started by a politician named Bismarck who started taking these small places and turning them into one ►



Shirley Riemer

larger state to create the German Empire. From 1871 to 1918 the German Empire boundaries never changed. There was Prussia, Bavaria, Mecklenburg and many others. Shirley says you will probably be more likely to know where your ancestors were NOT from than where they were from! Hanover was the largest place in Germany and now is known as Lower Saxon.

Germans coming to the U.S. came with one sole purpose and that was the "free land" availability. There was nothing "free" in the German Empire for them. So when they sailed to the U.S. they gave up everything they had, but this new land was worth it to them. They would have no church affiliation, no common language, and often times no family in this new land. It was told many times that brothers came here to avoid the draft but this was not the general thing. Many Germans settled in Pennsylvania (aka the German State) and were not well liked because they were so different, with different habits.

Shirley says the one most important factor in finding your ancestor is their place of origin. You have to know the town from which they

came. You must remember that they came in groups and they traveled from town to town in that same group, they went to church together (both Catholic and Lutheran). The German priests or ministers were very good record keepers and the records were kept within the churches in the new land. The first records were at the discretion of the priest/minister which was just a matter of writing data down in a large record book. Eventually those book pages became column-ized and are now easier to read. But remember that you will find many variations in your ancestors spelling of the last name because many spelled phonically. So look for other spellings of the name.

One good source of information are volumes of each German state in which the cities are listed alphabetically but then, also, the city is listed by the last letter of the city name (e.g. DORNDORF - listed alpha by "D," then listed by "F"). Several other places to check out :

- The 1880 Census - Shirley claims it's "gold." Remember if your ancestor arrived before 1892 they did not arrive at Ellis Island but at Castle Gardens, N.Y. ►

Ellis Island didn't exist prior to 1892.

- German Immigrants in American Church Records
- Library of Congress (insert last name or city name)
- Family History Center in Salt Lake - tip: if you have trouble finding someone or something, ask the docent on duty which way they suggest looking, then when that docent changes ask the next one on duty. Each will have a different way of problem-solving and you may find what you need from either one of them.
- FamilySearch pilot (search this often)
- Research neighbors since they often stayed in clusters and married one another
- OSB -(Ortssippenbucher, Ortsfamilienbucher)

Shirley told us that her first trip to Germany was by herself and when she arrived in the researched town she simply knocked on doors and asked questions. People were polite and considerate towards her - surprised that she was all alone! Asking the oldest person in town questions can net you a lot usually. Visiting the town's cemetery you might find a tightly sealed bottle next to a grave marker which could have history and ancestor information inside. Talk to the person at the hardware store or the person at the town library in your German town - you may be surprised what you find.

When you write to someone or some business in Germany, write it in German because not all Germans speak English (a myth); be precise with full name, location, etc and don't put in a lot of "flowery" words. Germans are straight forward folks. She told us a story about a researcher who had heard about a chief touting his firehouse and men in a particular town. So the researcher wrote to the fire chief rather than the records hall and got the information on what they were looking for.

If you didn't get a chance to hear Shirley speak, she was extremely good. Don't forget to download her Resources, Ideas, Schemes for Solving German Family History Problems. ■



President's Message

By Barbara Dittig

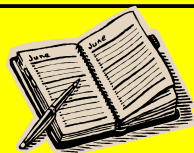
2009 has come to an end and a new decade has begun. During the past year, sadly, some of our members have lost loved ones. My thoughts and prayers go out to them. It is comforting to know that our "genealogy family" is supporting of those in need. May you all step into this new year with hope and renewed energy.

Speaking of the "New Year", it's customary to make those NY resolutions and somehow stick with them. Number one on my list is to identify family treasures. Ask older members of the family if they have items that are special to them. Find out why they are special, (make notes). Who bought them? Where? Who has owned them? When and how did you come to have them? If possible, go from room to room, jogging memory by asking whether there are such items.

Open a "Family Inventory" file in your computer with subfolders for father's side and mother's side. Have a page for each item and include a picture and a story of its history. For instance, the grandfather clock in the hallway, where did it come from? who bought it? How old is it? Once this is done, send a copy to each family member. Hopefully this will eliminate any possibility of that treasure ending up as a garage sale item. You might want to specify whom you wish to receive a particular item. This should be included on your list. Having said this, I think I'd better get started doing just that before the urge passes!

2010 will be an exciting year for SRVGS. We are celebrating our 25th Anniversary in May. Plans are in the making and volunteers will be appreciated. I'm looking forward to a festive and fun event. Stay tuned! ■





MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR

January 2010

- 5 **Tuesday – 10:00 am.** A Board Meeting was held at the home of Ed Mason in Alamo.
- 19 **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

February 2010

- 2 **Tuesday – 10:00 a.m.** A Board Meeting will be held at the home of Ed Mason in Alamo.
- 16 **Tuesday – 10:00 a.m.** The General Meeting will be held at the LDS Church on Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo.

SRVGS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



THE MASTER GENEALOGIST INTEREST GROUP

This is a genealogy software users group for PC's with their focus on the use of The Master Genealogist. This group will meet January 19th at the home of Jack and Barbara Johnson in Danville after the General meeting, about 12:30 pm. Plan to bring your bag lunch. Barbara Johnson will be the interim contact person for the group. Contact Barbara by Phone 837-2153 or e-mail bcj616@earthlink.net



GENEALOGY COMPUTER SOFTWARE USERS GROUP

This is a genealogy software users group for PC's. Interested persons should think about their future plans for this group and discuss their

options. Gail cannot meet with this group on Wednesday for the next three months. Gail Roche Van Wye is currently the contact person for the group. Phone 253-1096 or e-mail gailrvw@aol.com.



MacGen – MACINTOSH GENEALOGY GROUP

This group specializes in uses of the Macintosh by Genealogists. Meet Mac Genealogy enthusiasts from all over Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. On Wednesday, January 13 (2nd Wednesday), at 7pm – they will have their monthly workshop from 7-9pm with free-form question and answer sessions. On Saturday, January 23, at 1:30pm – They will have their General Meeting. Ed Mason will show you how easy it is to make family history movies using iMovie. If you've also been thinking about using Final Cut Express for your movies, Ed has a lot of experience with it and will discuss it too. They will also demonstrate some new tips for the Mac Reunion Genealogy Program. And they will also be giving away a book as a door prize, "Producing a Quality Family History", by Patricia Law Hatcher, C G Meetings are held at the Oakland Regional Family History Center Conference Room, 4766 Lincoln Ave., Oakland, CA 94602. Please refer to the MacGen web site at <http://www.macgen.org>. Bill George is the contact person for this group. Phone: (510) 538-2449 or e-mail williamcgeorge@Gmail.com. Organizers of the MacGen group are Bill George, Ed Mason, and Rich Peterson.



GERMAN – The German Group will meet Wednesday, January 27th (the fourth Wednesday) at the home of Fran and Bob Schweitzer in Walnut Creek. If you are interested in joining the group please contact Helen Odegard. Helen Odegard is the contact person for this group. For more information, please contact her at 932-6796 or e-mail shodegard@aol.com.



IRISH – This special interest group will meet January 13th (the second Wednesday) at 10:00 am. at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. They are also scheduled to meet on February 10th. Patty ►

Erickson is the contact person for the group. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail, russpat@comcast.net



SOUTHERN – The Southern Interest Group will meet at 10 am on January 14th (the Second Thursday of the month) at the Family History Center on Stone Valley Road. They are also scheduled to meet on February 11th. 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.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

12 January Tuesday 7:30 pm

The Livermore-Amador Genealogy Society will have one of its regular meetings at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. This will be a time for member sharing. Members will share short stories about their genealogy research experience.

26 January Tuesday 1 to 3 pm

The Sacramento German Genealogical Society will hold its regular monthly meeting at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Lusk Drive and St. Marks Way in Sacramento. Jim Rader will give a presentation entitled, "Genetic Genealogy: DNA as a key to Your Ancestors." It's a topic to which constant changes need to be heeded and once again Jim Rader is there to keep this audience posted. ■



EDUCATION

 **PUBLISHING** – "Exploring Ideas for Publishing" - Meets again at 10am on Thursday, January 21 at the Family History Center. If you are thinking of writing up and, possibly, publishing some of your family history, come and exchange ideas, methods and goals. Contact Frances Lloyd for more information.

 **SCANDINAVIAN** - The group meets each Wednesday at 1 pm in the FHC. Research help is available from Linda Bailey and other group members.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING:

 Acalanes Adult Education Classes on Genealogy resume at the Del Valle campus January 6. For the schedule see <http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted> or call 925-280-3980 ext. 8001. The brochure includes Rossmoor Computer Club classes and Mac Classes

 For the schedule of classes at the Oakland Family History Center, see <http://www.oaklandfhc.org> or call 510-531-3909. Classes are free (nominal charge for handouts) but pre-registration is required. "Getting the most from Ancestry.com" is on Tuesday 1/19 at 1pm with Kay Arnold. The eight-week Intermediate Genealogy Research Series begins on Feb. 9, at 7:30 pm.

 Workshops at the National Archives, San Bruno will begin again in March. Each is \$15 payable in advance. For the schedule see:

<http://www.archives.gov/pacific/san-francisco/index.html> (650) 238-3501 ■





SRVGS Anniversary - 25 Years!

PART 3

By: Patty Erickson

September 1996. We had our first meeting at the Golden State Rehabilitation Hospital in San Ramon. Our member, Claudia Mortensen, was on the board of directors at the center and she negotiated a rent free meeting room in exchange for genealogical help and classes for any interested staff and patients. We quickly settled into our new meeting place, getting spoiled with hot water and coffee already made. No more juggling our 3 big pots for hot water and coffee! we had plenty of room for a tape library, freebie basket, and name tags which were finally corralled using scrap books. We also had comfortable chairs and a microphone; what a luxury-an actual microphone! During the summer we actually found affordable insurance. The money saved on rent was available for insurance. I think we all were relieved and felt a sense of security knowing we had insurance.

The Danville Library had given forth some positive interest in giving us possible space for a genealogy resource center. By January 1997, the Danville Library allotted our society 18 feet of shelf space for our collection. Jack Johnson, Shirley Terry, and Francis Lloyd were the hard working members who helped to shape this agreement. Our library acquisition committee was also in place, with Jack Johnson, Dorothy Stanton, and Irma Dotson. Our current library committee is still Jack Johnson and Dorothy Stanton, with the addition of Francis Lloyd and Ed O'Donnell.

At our February 1997 meeting, Win Kynett, who had steadfastly recorded our programs for the past 10 years, regretfully resigned from his job. It was hard to fill his shoes. At the March meeting, Win Kynett was awarded our fourth Life Membership.

In May 1997, our society bought a brick to help in the restoration of the Danville train depot to become the future home of the Museum of San Ramon.

There were now 30 books occupying the Genealogy shelves of the Danville Library. Our membership form that year added a place for a library donation to create a fund for future book purchases.

In May 1998, Dorothy Stanton became our 10th president. In February of that year, Denise SHOA became our 5th newsletter editor. However, by June Denise moved out of the area and we had no one to quickly step into this job. Denise kindly left some information to be used for 2 or 3 newsletters. Dorothy Stanton did the June and July/August newsletters. Since when does the president have to do the newsletter? You forget Dorothy was our prior third newsletter editor and most capably filled this position for several years. The Board brought forth the idea of a committee run newsletter, with a coordinating editor. This would take the pressure off a single person being responsible for the entire newsletter. By September, Jean Hunt became our first coordinating editor, but in reality, our 6th newsletter editor.

In September 1999, came the exciting Vendor's Fair, set up by Claudia Mortensen, our program chairperson (yes, only 1 person). The vendors were: Skeleton Closet, The Gold Bug Maps, Old Books, Genealogy on CD, Nakamura's Family Tree Video, and Genealogy Books. It was a whole new experience and greatly enjoyed by everyone. Too bad it only happened once.

Our meeting place at the Rehabilitation Center came into jeopardy when the hospital began an extensive remodeling and construction project. We found our meeting room was indeed part of this project. The search began again for a new meeting place after almost 3 years at the Rehabilitation Center. ■

News from the Danville Stake Family History Center

By Janet Broderick

The Danville FHC has preordered the Third Edition of *The German Research Companion*, authored by Shirley J. Riemer, Dr. Roger P. Minert, and Jennifer A. Anderson. We will receive it sometime in February and hope it will be a help to those doing German research.

The Family History department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has negotiated with several subscription sites to allow access to those sites at family history centers for free. Come in and try them!! The sites are:

- 19th Century British Library Newspaper Digital Archive
- FamilyHistoryLink
- FindMyPast.co.uk
- Footnote.com
- The Genealogist
- Genline.com (launcher)
- Godfrey Memorial Library
- Heritage Quest Online
- Historic Map Works Library Edition
- World Vital Records
- Alexander Street Press - The American Civil War:
 - Research database,
 - Letter & Diaries,
 - Images, Photographs, Posters, and Ephemera. ■

Do You have Something to Contribute?

Your SRVGS Newsletter is always in need of new material. Do you have an interesting story to relate? Some discovery that you want to share with others? Maybe an unusual experience that could help others in their own research. Anything you think will be of interest to the group. If so, we would be happy to include it in one of our issues. Anything in length from a half page to a page and a half of type written text would be ideal. Just write it up and forward it to the newsletter editor (rjventer@comcast.net). ■

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

President: Barbara Dittig 925-648-9364
e-mail: president@srvgensoc.org

1st V.P. Ileen Peterson 510-651-7728

2nd V.P. Program: Sherri Hedman 925-275-8123

3rd V.P. Membership: Ed Mason 925-838-7848

Recording Secretary: Lisa Cooke 925-831-8537

Corresponding Secretary: Kathy Javdani 925-736-5464

Treasurer: Gail Roche Van Wye 925-253-1096

Parliamentarian: Virginia Rood 925-937-8659

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Coordinator: Bob Venter 925-454-9919
e-mail: rjventer@comcast.net

Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke 925-838-8570
e-mail: 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.

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

INDIVIDUAL HELP

Do you need individual help in overcoming a "brick wall" in your research? Go to the SRVGS web site at: <http://srvgensoc.org/>, click on RESOURCES, then click on INDIVIDUAL HELP FOR SRVGS MEMBERS.

Want to help someone who is having research problems in your area of knowledge? Call Harry Baggett at 925.837.7960 to have your name added to the SRVGS Individual Help list.

Harry Baggett trvrlr@sbcglobal.net

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES TWEETS

Posted: 09 Nov 2009 03:38 PM PST

The following is a press release from the National Archives and Records Administration.

Washington, DC...The National Archives has signed on to Twitter! Check for all the latest Archives news and upcoming events at:

<http://twitter.com/archivesnews/>

New tweets will alert the public to exciting programs taking place at the National Archives in the Washington, DC, headquarters building and around the country at the 13 presidential libraries and 14 regional facilities. Learn about the National Archives connection to Elvis Presley's military hair cut and his famous visit to meet President Nixon. Be reminded of anniversaries of famous treaties, documents, and national events. Find out news about major projects happening at the Archives by following our tweets. ■

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