

SAN RAMON VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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Loretta Uranesh, President

February

1988

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, NEXT GENERAL MEETING

10 AM, DANVILLE WOMEN'S CLUB
242 W. Linda Mesa Avenue, Danville, (415) 837-1165

Peggy Frazier, program chairperson, announces that . . .

Mary Ellen Jones, UC, Bancroft Reference Librarian, will be our guest speaker. Mary Ellen thrills her audiences with unusual tales about tombstones and their contributions to genealogy. It promises to be a quite lively meeting. She has special interest in the Mother Lode Country where so many gold seekers lived and died. She sometimes uses colored slides in her presentations. Dare you miss this meeting!

*****see you the 16th*****

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

LOOK AT HOME PLEASE. . . . NOW

Some of our tapes can't seem to find their way home. Most have been away a long time. If you know where they are, please show them the way home at the February meeting. Here are the lost "sheep."



- C-1 Born in the Carolinas: Problem Solving
by JoWhite Linn/Brent Holcomb
- C-10 Research in Virginia by N. Yantis
- M-4 Preparing for a Genealogy Trip by Bette Kot
- M-8 Researching New Eng. and Mayflower Ancestry by Edith Thomas
- M-10 Is the computer for you? Helpful ways to organize material
- M-11 The National Archives by Artel Ricks

MAKE MY DAY

Genealogy made me what I am today.

Genealogy is relatively interesting.

VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY RESEARCH IS FREE . . .

The Virginia State Library, built during the Great Depression, was closed in August of last year (our last report) due to major electrical problems. However, there apparently continues to be research service available just for the asking. If research clerks find the record you request, they will send you a bill. When money is received, they will mail you the record (much like the Nat. Archives system). Send requests to: VA State Lib & Archives, 11th Street at Capitol Square, Richmond, VA 23219-3491.

Among records available are the following:

1810 (partial)-1880, 1900 & 1910 Federal census on microfilm

1853-1893 birth & death records on microfilm

Pre-1865 deeds, wills, court records, marriages, etc.

1782-1979 land & personal property tax records for all VA counties

Military service records and/or pension records for VA soldiers who served during the colonial wars, the Amer. Rev., War of 1812 & Civil War.

CAN'T FIND THAT VA TOWN ON A MAP?

If the town of your ancestor is no longer on the map, you might like to write to: U.S. Board of Geographical National Center, Stop 523, Reston, VA 22092. This center will check records to see if such a community ever existed in a specific area. The board has records of name changes and no longer existing towns.

COME WALK WITH US

Come walk with us,
Back through the vista of the years,
Which our ancestors knew.
We seek the trails which once they trod,
To find the spots where they once dwelt.
And while we search about our hearts,
Read weathered stones,
And turn musty pages of the past,
Their spirits come alive and walk with us.
We learn of them,
Their lives, their loves, their hates.
And with their knowledge,
Learn to understand ourselves,
For each of them has given to us a past.
We owe them this--
That they shall be remembered for that gift.
--Fern Stokes Eller

Epitaphs: Gone to see for myself.

I expected this,
But not so soon.

Here lies a father of 29
There would have been more
But he didn't have time.

HISTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, TENN IN THE MAKING

A collection of Topical & Family Sketches is being prepared by the Watauga Association of Genealogists--Upper East, Tenn. The book will be 9x12 hardbound in simulated leather with gold stamped cover. Anticipated delivery: Late 1988. The history will be compiled by all families who are or once were residents of Washington County, Tenn. Each person may submit a 500 word family story with one picture which will be printed free for each household. The deadline for receipt of your story and picture is June 15, 1988. Mail your story & picture to: Watauga Assoc. of Gen., P.O. Box 117, Johnson City, TN 37605.

THE GREAT PHILADELPHIA WAGON ROAD

Root Cellar--Sacramento Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 265, Citrus Heights, CA 95611, is sponsoring a Jo White Linn Seminar, March 19th and 20th at Lichen School, 8319 Lichen Drive, Citrus Heights.

On Saturday Jo White Linn will cover "Migration down the Great Wagon Road" (Penn. thru Virginia to the Carolinas and into Georgia; movement of ethnic and religious groups--specific families discussed). On Sunday she speaks on "Interpretation of Southern Research" and "Getting into Print." There is a charge for the seminar.

ENGLISH SURNAMES AND THEIR ORIGIN

Pat Monteith volunteered her summer, 1987, issue of This England, an English publication, which luckily for us, has a fascinating article on the origin of some English surnames. Here goes; I've picked some of the goodies from the article.

Not until the 15th century did surnames become permanent or hereditary. Previous to these times, single names given at the font, such as Richard, John, Mary, Agnes, etc., and also those which we would call nicknames; describing face, temperament, morals, clothes, and general characteristics--**Long**, **Short**, **White**, for example.

The growth of surnames comes from the need for identification. Let us take some sample cases. William lives in the wood and may well become known as William of the Wood, hence, William **Wood**. He has three sons. The first is known as Will's son, hence **Wilson**. The second, Richard, prefers playing in open spaces and is often found disporting on the village green, thus we have Richard (of the) **Green**. His brother Henry is a great one with the axe and is indeed strong in the arm; and so we have Henry **Armstrong**. Richard has a son, **Richardson**. His son Dick has a son, known as **Dickson** or **Dixon**.

In the 14th century ownership of even a strip of land or humble dwelling could establish a surname. There are, for instance, 40 such landholders recorded in Udimore, Sussex, alone--e.g. Robert-Atte-wood (**Atwood**), Simon-Atte-clyffe (**Atcliffe**), Alice-Atte-Lee (**Attlee**).

As the population grew, occupations became more distinctive and trade or occupational names were established. Examples from the sheep trade: **Wooller**, **Wooley**, **Woolman**, **Staple**, **Shearer**, **Shean**, **Lombert**, **Shepherd**, **Weatherhead**, **Barker**, **Weaver**, **Webster**, **Webb**, **Walker**, **Fuller**, **Tucker**, **Dyer**, **Lister**, **Mercer**, **Draper**, **Hatter**, **Capper**, **Chaucer**.

Names connected with food and supply come down to us through the centuries: **Famer**, **Baker**, **Miller**, **Butcher**, **Cook**, **Brewster**, **Malthus**, **Cooper**, **Vinter**, **Fisher**. Hunting, essential in early times, gives us **Hunt**, **Hunter**, **Forrester**, **Foster**, **Fowler**, **Parker**, **Skinner**, **Warren**, **Warner**, **Hart**, **Hinde**, **Doe**, **Stagg**, **Faulkner**, **Fawkes**.

Wood and all derived from it, our country previously being all but covered in woods and forests, played an ever important part in the lives of our ancestors. To this day we meet **Wood**, **Woodhouse**, **Woodman**, **Wheeler**, **Carpenter**, **Wainwright**, **Cartwright**, **Arkwright**, **Sawyer**, **Coleman**.

Occupational names stretching back even to Saxon times are in the telephone directories today: **Arrowsmith**, **Piper**, **Hornblower**, **Barber**, **Scrivener**, **Goldsmith**, **Reeve**, **Glazier** and **Hayward**. Over 350 **Potters** can be found in the London phone directory in 1988.

In the buttery or larder, the **Spencer** is checking the huge quantities of food (stores). The "spense" being an equivalent to a larder, is a word still used in some North Country farmhouses. A princess now, but Lady Diana **Spencer's** family name originated in the servants' quarters!

LOCATING BIRTHPLACES OF GERMAN IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS

by Tom Reitter, P.O. Box 460, Livermore, CA 94550

(edited for brevity from Livermore-Amador Gen. Society qrtly Vol. 7, No. 2)

The first line I researched was simple because the immigrant ancestor had, in his old age, written letters to his children in which he named his ancestral village. Uninteresting letters but key facts provided. In another case it was the obituary of my ancestor's uncle that provided the birthplace. Try to collect all information possible on all ancestors and their siblings or even their in-laws. This is true even if you don't expect to learn anything new about your ancestor. If nothing else it is something to do when no direct line of attack presents itself.

In two other cases the only listing of birthplace for a man and his wife was on their tombstones in Iowa. Another problem came out when I tried to get their German marriage record. I had an approximate year, and I had birth records for their children. As it turned out, the town and women were Protestant, but the out-of-town husband was Catholic. The Catholic wedding had taken place in a neighboring village. Never limit your searches to the religion you expect based on American records.

Another case involved a very unusual name. The immigrant had married a German immigrant from Alsace in Iowa. When his surname was not found by a local professional researcher in Alsace anywhere near the wife's native village, I had to consider variant spellings and the possibility that his name had been modified in French or American records. The key in this case, however, was checking Civil War records. Despite being 40 years old, he spent a year in the Union Army (always check for Civil War service if aged 15-45 at the time). On his enlistment record he had given as his birthplace a village which was not listed in any reference (it had probably been written by someone else based on the sound). Because the surname was unusual, I paid a German genealogist to check his large private files for the region. The only entry was for a man from a village with a name similar to the one in the Civil War record. Subsequently I found my ancestor in the village records; the person in the genealogist's files was his uncle.

Another case involved a common name for which family tradition provided a city of birth. As is frequently the case, the city records were of no help. The surname occurred in many neighboring villages. Because I knew approximately when some half-siblings of my ancestor had emigrated, I wrote to the state (not federal) archives in Germany. After several months they wrote back that they had found a possible appropriate file, which they offered to copy upon receipt of their research fee. The file turned out to be the bureaucratic paperwork required for my ancestor's half-brother to get permission to emigrate from Imperial Germany (1871-1918) as a draft-age male. The file included two letters by his sister in L.A. My ancestor's birthplace was in the paperwork along with other interesting information.

Many German states in the 19th century required permission to emigrate, even prior to formation of the Second German Empire in 1871. These files usually have information on occupation, immediate family, and financial situation.

My last German line was particularly difficult. The name, Joseph Fischer, is extremely common throughout Germany. Once I had exhausted his wife's home area, there seemed to be nowhere to look. Joseph Fischers' of appropriate age and occupation could be found everywhere.

The key was two small "visiting card" photographs, which were frequently ordered by German emigrants during the second half of the 19th century prior to leaving. These typically had the name and address of the photographer on the back. In this case, I had two different ones from towns about 30 miles apart. I proceeded to hire a local researcher on the assumption that the ancestor's village was in this region. The researcher found my ancestor on the emigrant file list in the German state archives for this region. His occupation, exact date of birth, and approximate date of emigration all agreed with what I already knew from other sources, so I am confident that this is the right person.

I have found all eight of my German immigrant ancestors' birthplaces. Why? German immigrants tended to come later (in American history) when records and newspapers were better in America. German records tend to be better organized and their archives are staffed by professional archivists. There also seems to be greater variety of German surnames, which helps to reduce confusion.

PATTY CONNETT ANNOUNCES LIBRARY TRIPS

Library Trips Committee Chairperson Patty Connett has indicated that members may take advantage of arranged library trips. Here's the schedule:

Tuesday, February 22 Calif. Genealogical Society Library 300 Brannan Street (Suite 409), San Francisco, \$5.00 fee for non-CGS members. Meet behind Alpha Beta, Danville at 8:30 if you wish to carpool

Wednesday, March 1 National Archives, 1000 Commodore Drive, San Bruno; meet at 8:30 behind Alpha Beta to carpool

Monday, March 22 Mayflower Society, 405 14th Street, Oakland; meet at 9:00 behind Alpha Beta to carpool

Wednesday, April 27 California Historical Society, 2099 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco; meet at noon behind Alpha Beta to carpool

Tuesday, May 24 Doe Library, U. C. Campus, Berkeley; meet Alpha Beta 8:30 to carpool

June, 1988 California Genealogy Society Fair, time and place yet to be announced; a fantastic event last year

RESEARCHING FOR A MAIDEN NAME

Here are a few hints for those of you having difficulty finding the maiden name of a relative:

1. Obtain a death certificate if within the past 100 years.
2. If more than 100 years, obtain all her children's death certificates.
3. Seek out newspaper obituaries.
4. Obtain her children's marriage certificates.
5. Examine public church records found in libraries.
6. Examine unpublished records microfilmed at branch LDS libraries.
7. Examine the International Gen. Index (IGI) on microfiche at LDS lib.
8. Obtain divorce papers from county courthouse where filed.
9. Examine Newspaper Indexes by Anita Cheek Milner for records from burned courthouses and churches no longer in existence.
10. Read county histories for biographies of individuals and their families.
 11. Read military pension information, widow's affidavits, bounty land warrants.
 12. Read published family genealogies, bibliographies in book form.
 13. Examine Survey of American Gen. Periodicals Indexes by Kip Sperry; also state and local historical society quarterlies.
 14. Look for wills; identifies daughters usually with married names. Write local historical societies and ask for an index check.
 15. Send out queries to periodicals and quarterlies in the areas where your ancestors were.
 16. Research deeds and other land deeds and records.
 17. Sometimes a census record will mention a mother-in-law.



DESCENDANTS



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STUDY GROUPS MEET, DISCUSS, LEARN

The special study groups organized at the January general membership meeting have met and taken various courses of action. Here's a progress report on the five groups.

Computers: At Peg Frazier's house, January 27; 10 people showed; shared all aspects of computer used in genealogy; Roots, IBM hard disc owners had most to share; will meet at Bob Heacox's house on Feb 29; other members looking into what programs to buy. Peg is available via phone for questions; she uses Family Roots program.

Irish: Met January 27 at Mary Parrott's house; 8 people attended; meeting again February and in March; Marilyn Fullam heads group; discussed timeline, history, methods of research in Ireland and problem solving.

German: Have not met yet; will meet at Carol Glover's house p.m. on February 16 following our general membership meeting.

Southern: Met January 28 at Carol Sutfin's house; 12 attended; meeting next time at Frances Lloyd's house on March 3, 10 a.m.; traded ideas, information; lots of beginners present; members will continue to share materials.

Publications: Met January 27 at F. Lloyd's house; next meeting February 24; 9 people in attendance; each given an assignment to do, research/share for next meeting; each to bring two copies of assignment.

YES, NOMINATION COMMITTEE NEEDED ALREADY

President Loretta Vranish reminded members of the Executive Board at its meeting on February 3 that planning must take place now for next year's officers. Two members of the nominating committee were appointed already; a third will be solicited from the floor at the next general membership meeting.

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