

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 305

Diablo, CA 9452/8-8308

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. XX² No. 12 July - 2005

THIS MONTH - JULY 21, 2005

The Palatine Movement -From Germany To Settlements In America

Our guest speaker for our July Meeting will be Gail Roche Van Wye. Gail will present a brief overview of the German migrations to, and within the USA from the 1650s to World War I. She will concentrate on the Colonial American time period, emphasizing the first large colonial settlement group referred to as the Palatines, and the long-term influence and impact they had.

Gail was born in southeastern Pennsylvania and grew up in small Pennsylvania Dutch villages and towns, never living on a farm! She received a BA from Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana with majors in American and European History, Geography, and Botany. She worked for 25 years as an Insurance Broker, and over 35 years as a volunteer for many civic and educational organizations. Gail's maternal, Pennsylvania Dutch ancestors all lived within the same 15 square miles for around 250 years. They were part of the earliest Palatine German Emigration to New York, circa 1710, and then onto Penn's colony in Pennsylvania, circa 1725-30. A few arrived in Philadelphia as late as the 1760s. Her paternal grandmother was the Philadelphia born daughter of a mid-1880 immigrant from Baden, Germany and his wife, who was from an established Philadelphia/ Germantown family. The different experiences these numerous Germanic immigrant ancestors had, led Gail to a more general study of Germans in American, and their nationwide impact throughout our history. Her geography studies have led her to conduct both demographic and migration research about this ethnic group.

Gail began her genealogical adventures over twenty years ago and she has a wealth of knowledge, experience, and information to share with other genealogists. For the past two years she has assisted Harry Baggett in teaching the Computer Genealogy Class at DVC - San Ramon Center.

We look forward to welcoming Gail Roche Van Wye to the San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society.

JUNE MEETING

Reading and Transcribing Colonial Handwriting

Speaker: Marge Bell Reporter: Lee Schlenker

Our speaker for June was Marge Bell from the Oakland Family History Library (LDS). She has spent the past 30 years doing all sorts of family history and has taken on reading and transcribing Colonial handwriting. She was extremely interesting and used both "Power Point" and the chalk-board to demonstrate. (So some of her information I won't be able to show you exactly in this report).

Many of us got it the first time around and many did not - but with practice we were getting better by the end of her program! She also had informative handouts for us which included a sample of the Colonial Alphabet and handwriting styles. Much of her information came from Kip Sperry who wrote "*Reading Early American Handwriting*".

"Paleography" is the study of early handwriting

or the rules of reading old handwriting; but also refers to the study of the history of early scripts and analysis of handwriting and inscriptions. Many of us have ancestors from the Colonial time and you should be able to correctly decipher the correct information from a document when you find it.

There are a few basics which Marge went over with us. (You'll have to use your imagination with this.) Some letters can look alike: "e" may look like an "o" with a circle at the top; "c" can look like "r" and "c" or "r" can look like a "t"; "I" and "J" are interchangeable (so are "i" and "j"). Some letters were simply written differently than they are now: s looks like f (until mid-1800s - see it in 1850 census, not usually in 1860); double s can look like p; r can be inverted or old style - more in 1600s than later; h can be inverted or even go below the line, again mostly in the 1600s; ascenders and descenders can be exaggerated - i.e. d, y, g, h; flourishes, swirls, squiggles are common. A symbol called the thorn looks like a "y" but is a "th", it makes words like "the", "that", "they" look like "ye", "yat", and "yey". Abbreviations are common: the scribe may indicate an abbreviation with a symbol, for instance a colon, a line after a few letters, a line through a word, or a flying letter (Jn^o); a tilde (~) or a dash over a letter means the letter should be doubled; X can stand for Christ as in Xopher (Christopher) or for a 10 as in Xber (December).

Marge told us to look for standard legal phrases - i.e. Know all men by these presents; I give and bequeathe; Being weak of body but sound of mind; Imprimis (meaning "in the first place"). She also reminded us that spelling was not standardized until about the Civil War, so say a word out loud - if it sounds right when you say it out loud, it's right. This includes names - Smith, Smyth and Smythe or Bassette and Baset. Look for vowels to be doubled or reversed (no such thing as I before E except after C); look for e's added at the end; Y may be substituted for I. And don't forget the calendar adjustment and change: in 1752 a change from the Julian (Old Style) Calendar to the Gregorian (New Style) Calendar was made. Prior to 1752 March was the first month of the year. The Gregorian (NS) Calendar made January the

first month of the year. So, if you should see OS after the date it's prior to 1752 and NS is after 1752. George Washington's birth was recorded as 11th of February 1731/2 in the family bible.

She suggest that we educate ourselves on the basics, ignore spelling and the rules of punctuation and capitalization, expect it to make sense - if it doesn't something is probably wrong, - and practice, practice, practice.

A few of the techniques of reading: read through the document quickly to get the gist skipping anything you can't figure out easily; read for common sense and content; title or profession may appear after the name, don't mistake it for part of the name (i.e. John Frye Gentleman, John Jones Baker); look for same name or word in other places; sometimes ink will flake off making a letter look different; go back to what was unreadable and look at the words letter by letter - can you find the unreadable letters elsewhere in that document where you know the word?

When transcribing maintain the same lines, capital letters, punctuation and spelling of the original; indicate your interpretation in brackets [], not in parentheses (); put your interpretation in once per word - e.g. ye [the] - once in the document.

This entire program went so fast. There was the Q & A as we went along while Marge was speaking. I think we could have listened to her until late into the afternoon. It was an interesting program, highly informative and by the end of her talk we could do fairly well reading the examples she had done on her "Power Point". And as she says - practice, practice, practice!

I would suggest that you get a copy of her handout from one of the SRVGS members. It was an excellent handout!

A Thought To Think About

"To die completely, a person must not only forget but be forgotten, and he who is not forgotten is not dead."

Samuel Butler

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR JULY/AUG 2005

5 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. The Board Meeting was held at Patty Erickson's home in Pleasant Hill.

19 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. 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. The speaker is scheduled to be Gail Roche Van Wye. Her topic is to be: *The Paletine Movement from Germany to Settlements in America.*

Library Trip: There will NOT be a library trips in July and August.

The September trip will be to the National Archives in San Bruno; the October trip will be to Sutro in San Francisco.

We still need a Library Trip Coordinator. Louise Ford has all the trips planned. The new coordinator would just be charge of the car pooling.

AUGUST 2005

Our General Meeting will NOT be held during the month of August (SRVGS Standing Rules)

SRVGS Special Interest Groups: JULY/AUG 2005

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP (The Master Genealogist) - This group will not meet during the months of July and August. This is a genealogy software users group for PC's with their focus on the use of The Master Genealogist. Peggy Dearman is the contact person for the group. Phone 837-1621 or e-mail dearman@pacbell.net. This group is scheduled to meet again Tuesday September 20 at the home of Peggy Dearman on Morninghome Road.

GERMAN – This group will not meet during the months of July and August. The regular time for them to have a meeting at someone's home is the fourth Wednesday. For further details, the contact person for the group is Fran Schweitzer

25) 935-5744 or e-mail FranSchw@pacbell.net

IRISH – This special interest group does not plan to meet during the months of July and August. They normally meet on the second Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Patty Erickson, 10 Ridge Place in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net for further information.

SOUTHERN – This group does plan to meet July 12 (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Linda Sada, 1120 Mustang 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.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION/INTERNET –

Some interested members may wish to continue communicating and receiving messages via the network established by Jack Johnson, group coordinator. This group does not otherwise get together for meetings on a regular basis. Their purpose is to 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 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. On March 21 a message was sent to an updated list of interested users at their current email addresses.

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. This will be done a minimum of once a month. Members will always have the option to Opt-Out. Notify Ed Mason at: edmason@sbcglobal.net

1. If your email address does not appear in Handbook, and you wish to receive these messages.
2. If your email address does appear in the handbook and you do not wish to receive these notices.

3. If you have some information that you would like to make available to the membership.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

14 July Thursday 7 pm

The Contra Costa County Genealogical Society will hold one of their regular meetings at the LDS Church, 3700 Concord Boulevard in Concord. Vera Boyles will present her Guides to Research in Eastern European Countries.

8 August Tuesday 7:30 pm

The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society will hold one of their regular meetings at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. Don Dickenson will give a presentation about Mayflower Ancestry. Future presentations at their meetings will be as follows:

13 September Linda Garrett Tombstones

11 October Chuck Knuthson

Research Facilities in the Golden State

17 September Saturday 9 am to 4 pm

The Napa Valley Genealogical Society will sponsor a fall seminar. Program speakers are scheduled and the California State Genealogical Alliance will hold its annual meeting at noon. This will be held at the Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street in Napa. The pre-registration fee for non-members will be \$ 25. For further information visit their web site at www.napanet.net/~nvgbs or e-mail Sandra Hoover: nvgbs@napanet.net

15 October Saturday

The Concord/Walnut Creek LDS and Family History Center will sponsor their annual fall seminar at 1590 Denkinger Road in Concord.

Immigration Websites

Ancestry Quick Tip by Georgia Gratke

I read an article today about searching for ships. Some years ago when I was tracking my husband's German ancestors, who came into Baltimore, I found the following site. I tried it today, and it is still valid. It is www.fortunecity.com/littleitaly/amalfi/13/ships.htm. According to this site there have been three ships named *Bremen*. It gives, fully, the description, dates made, and by whom, etc. It is a wonderful treasure trove on ships.

President's Message

By Patty Erickson

How organized is your genealogy? Is your family giving you strong urgings to get it all together? Are you still waiting to find information on one more ancestor or one more generation of your family?

I must admit, I'm somewhat guilty on all three questions. I would like to share with you two books I recently purchased on the subject of organizing your genealogy.

"Organizing your Family History Research"

By Sharon DeBartolo Carmach, Betterway Books, 4700 East Galbraith Road, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45236, Or www.familytreemagazine.com. She tells you how to organize your families into files using all your vital records. She also details how to better organize your home space for storage. She reviews how and what to do with your photos for best preservation and how to organize your research projects. She even gives a section of research forms you may photocopy for your own use. I found this to be a logical, easy to follow form of organization with many helpful ideas.

The other book is "30 Seconds, A Guide to Organizing your Genealogy Files" by Robert Langman, PhD and Jimmy B. Parker, BS, AG, Heritage Knights, LLC, 84 West 7500 South, Midvale, UT 84047 or www.needhelpto.com. The object of this book is: you are so organized that you can find any person, family, or document/record in 30 seconds. Their system uses color coding for each grandparent line. They organized all file folders according to color using colored tabs on each folder. This way you always know which family line you are working on and where a new family line fits into your family. There are many other helpful skills in this book. Again, this is another logical solution to organizing.

For those of you who are already highly organized, these books are possibly not applicable. However, to those of us still somewhat stumbling and floundering around, they might spark an interest and get us slowly moving to the correct organizational direction.

Patty Erickson

Resource Binders

LDS-Family History Center- Alamo
Linda Bailey's Reports

Do you need some help getting started in researching a specific locality or have you come up against a wall? Maybe our collection of Research Binders will have just what you need. Located on the shelves in the computer room are several dozen white binders each specific to a different locality or general topic. There are binders for all of the U.S. states and for many countries. Each contains research guides, maps, foreign language word lists, helpful URLs and other related resources for that locality. The amount of information in each binder varies depending on what has been brought to our attention or who has been researching in that area (the "Italian" binder is bursting its bindings, thanks to Mike Fiorenza). Right below the "locality" resources are a few "subject-specific" binders such as "Land Records," "Military and War Records," "African-American Research," etc. There is also one binder labeled "Danville FHC Holdings." It contains a list of all the fiche and microfilms that are on permanent loan at our facility. It is a good idea to check it especially before you order fiche so that you are not ordering something we already have.

Also – just a reminder – we will be **closed for the month of August** to give our hard working volunteers a summer break.

Use "Find" Tool for Locating Surnames on Long Pages

By Sylvia H. Sonneborn York, PA
Ancestry 7/5/05

I am thrilled with all the cemeteries that are being indexed and posted online free, but it is time-consuming to look through these lists for ancestors. I go to "Edit" on my toolbar and then "Find (on this page)" [a window pops up center screen] and then type in the name/last name that I am seeking. Then when I am finished typing the name, I click on "Find Next" and it takes me right to the first occurrence of that name and highlights it if it is in the document. Then I can click on "Find Next" a second and third

time, etc., to find any others with the same name in that document. This is a most valuable, time-saving feature. So if you are not utilizing this tool, try it to save time.

State Research Guide

Family Tree Magazine started a series of research guides in February. Each issue they highlight two states. They give brief history of the state, plus list fast facts and key resources - websites, books, organizations, archives, historic sites, visitor information and a timeline. The following is a list of the states that have already appeared in *Family Tree Magazine*:

Oregon and Delaware - February/2005
Louisiana and Wisconsin - April/2005
Tennessee and Connecticut - June/2005
Montana and Kansas - August/2005

Here is what's coming up:

Utah and Michigan - October/2005
Virginia and Hawaii - December/2005

"Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow"
Helen Keller

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

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2nd V.P. Program:

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	Mary Tom	925-376-2756
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Why Didn't I See That?

By Patricia Law Hatcher, Ancestry Daily News

When I review the written compilations and conclusions of other researchers, I often see things that the author has overlooked. I suppose it would be nice to say that such observations are brilliance on my part, but that rarely is the case. They usually are things obvious enough that the researcher exclaims, "Why didn't I see that?"

"Why didn't I see that?" This is a question worth answering, because the answers can help us avoid problems in our own research. Let me begin with a disclaimer. Some of the vision problems described below are familiar to me as my own. I've exclaimed, "Why didn't I see that?" on more than one occasion myself.

Let's take a genealogical vision exam.

Tunnel Vision

Most of us are searching for our own ancestry. We find an ancestor and then seek his or her parents. When we find them, we shout "Eureka!" and immediately begin seeking their parents. We are wearing ancestral blinders. We ignore everyone other than *our* ancestor.

The corrective prescription would read,
"Equality for siblings!"

Your ancestor's siblings have the same parents as your ancestor. If you can't find your ancestor's parents, the solution may lie with siblings. Furthermore, it's awfully easy to make a mistake. I rather like the quality control of confirming that my ancestor's siblings have the same set of parents as my ancestor.

Far-Sightedness

Many of us are too goal oriented. Our eye is drawn to the unknown distant past instead of focusing on the portion of the past with which we have already connected. We are so anxious to push onward that we don't take the time to establish a firm base from which to do the pushing.

The corrective prescription would read,
"Slow down. Observe the scenery. Get to know the people."

Be thorough. Spend ample time in the locality and with the individuals you have identified

Near-Sightedness

This problem has become more common in recent years. People seem to over analyze each piece of evidence, discussing various reasons why the document might say what it does. It is true that we need to keep in mind the reasons a document was created and any legal or religious restrictions of the time, but too much analysis can detract from what is explicitly stated in the document.

The corrective prescription would read,
"Just the facts, ma'am."

Those of you who remember Dragnet will remember that Joe Friday understood perfectly well that the extra information being imparted would often obscure (intentionally or unintentionally) the information he needed.

I would rather see a straightforward presentation of all documents, unclouded by analysis, than to see something I recently encountered: several pages analyzing a document, without once telling me precisely what the document said.

Blurred Vision

One of the things I often see in narratives is smudged identities. Let me explain. Over and over I see a sentence such as "Henry deeded his land to his son John in 1830." Immediately, I want to know what the deed *really* said. Did Henry say "my son" or did he merely say "John?" I am left to puzzle whether the researcher knew there was a son John, assumed there was a son John, or *wished* there were a son John. When we add these "helpful" phrases, we smudge the identity of the individuals involved (in this case, perhaps, a second cousin once removed).

The corrective prescription would read,
"Always present literal transcriptions of names and relationships."

Until your research has been compiled and reviewed, William should remain William, Billy should remain Billy, Will jr. should remain Will jr., Wm. F. should remain Wm. F., and so on.

Poor Focus

This is the old-fashioned "can't see the forest for the trees" problem--or perhaps the "can't see the trees for the forest" problem. We need to maintain a balance and examine *both* the individual records and

the records in relationship to each other.

The corrective prescription would read, "Step back, blink twice, and look again. Then step forward, blink twice, and look again."

My favorite mechanism for doing so is to create a chronology with extracts of all records (including places), with names given exactly as in the records. It is amazing what is revealed when we let our ancestors live their lives in chronological order.

Monocular Vision

The genealogical manifestation of monocular vision is only researching half of a couple--almost always the male half because of the focus on surnames. We can all fall into this trap because women's birth surnames disappear upon marriage. But that is no reason to ignore the wife. Are we sure he had only one? What records do we have indicating her name? For exactly what years do we know the name of the wife?

The corrective prescription would read, "Give her a paragraph of her own."

If we force ourselves to discuss the wife as an individual, specifically identifying when we know of her presence, even if nameless (birth of a child, "Henry and wife received communion"), we are less likely to miss clues of identity or to latch onto the wrong ancestry.

Office Hours Are Over... but these prescriptions for clearer vision can be filled at any time --the sooner, the better for your research.

Ancestry Daily News - Patricia Law Hatcher, CG,
FASG - 8/25/2004

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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Deadling 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.

SRVGS Membership Application

It is time to renew your membership in our SRVGS Society. You will find a separate sheet dedicated to the application and also to the "Surname and Locality Searcher" Project.

Please complete both and **return** to the address provide on the **form before July 31st**.

A word about the "Surname and Locality Searcher" Project. Last year you were asked to submit the surnames and localities you were researching. That information has been compiled in a list to be used by the members to help them further their personal research by enabling each of you to seek out others with related information and matching interests. Both parties can benefit.

In completing the "Surname/Locality" form, PLEASE be sure to PRINT CLEARLY all entries. If you have more than three names, you man use the back of the form or use a separate piece of paper. When submitting your sate, county and/or country, PLEASE be more specific. Example: Do Not submit just "California" instead "California/Contra Costa County" or "California/Danville."

A sample copy of the "Surname/Locality Searcher" project will be on display at the July General Meeting. Information submitted on your 2005-2006 membership application will be imputed after all application have been received.

NOTE: Those who took sample copies please make the following correction in the "Index To Localities" section (or you will be contacting the wrong person for information):

Change all M-15 to M-16
R-5 to R-6
S-14 to S-15
S-10 to S-11

A Thought for You

"Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang there except those that sang best."

Henry Van Dyke 1852-1933

"What I've Learned Over a Lifetime"

I've learned that you can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk. *Age 6*
 I've learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back. *Age 9*
 I've learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up. *Age 12*
 I've learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me. *Age 15*
 I've learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures. *Age 25*
 I've learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there. *Age 29*
 I've learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it. *Age 39*
 I've learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it. *Age 41*
 I've learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little card. *Age 44*
 I've learned that children and grandparents are natural allies. *Age 46*
 I've learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours. *Age 49*
 I've learned that you can tell a lot about a man by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights. *Age 52*
 I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die. *Age 53*
 I've learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life. *Age 58*
 I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. *Age 62*
 I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you. *Age 65*
 I've learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision. *Age 66*
 I've learned that everyone can use a prayer. *Age 72*
 I've learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I've seen several. *Age 73*
 I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one. *Age 82*
 I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. *Age 85*
 I've learned that I still have a lot to learn. *Age 92*

Author unknown.

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