

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. XXI No. 5 November/December - 2005

THIS MONTH - November 15, 2005

"Research In England Prior To 1837"

Evelyn Bentley will be our guest speaker this month. Evelyn Bentley earned a B.A. in History at the University of the Pacific, a teaching credential at Cal-State East Bay, and a Master's Degree from San Jose State in European History. She taught history for 27 years at Chabot College and Las Positas. Some 20 years ago she began intense research in an effort to find ancestors of her Canadian grandfather. She has published two books based on her family research. Eighteen years ago she joined the part-time staff of the Oakland Family History Center. In 1996 she and her husband served as full-time volunteers at the LDS Hyde Park Family History Center in London for 18 Months. Now they continue to serve on the staff of the Oakland Family History Center. Since retirement in Brentwood, Evelyn has lectured to various organizations in the East Bay on history or genealogical topics.

This month's topic will cover the years before the Census and Civil Registration Records began. The emphasis in this lecture will be upon the use of the Parish Church Records, along with the geography and historical background of England. That will be followed by learning to use the Non-Conformist Church Records, Apprenticeship Records, Military Records, Newspapers, Records at the County Records Offices, Court Records, Probate Records, Land and Property, Tax Records, and the special problems posed by records in London.

October Meeting

"Finding Those Missing Heirs"

Speaker: David R. Owens

Reported by: Lee Schlenker

At this past October's meeting our speaker was David R. Owens who is a California native - born in Albany, CA. He is a graduate of El Cerrito High. He attended Stanford University as well as Harvard Law School. David served two years as the director of the Concord Family History Center. He has a law practice in Walnut Creek which specializes in representing heirs throughout the world who have inheritances in Northern California of which they are unaware, as well as doing Living Trusts and Wills.

His interest first started when one of his clients needed to find a family member who hadn't been heard of in a while. Mr. Owens located a company called *American Research Bureau* which helped him out immensely in locating that heir. After

talking with this company they told him they were always looking for representative lawyers across the nation to work for them. He was offered the job as a representative for this company in Northern California. And now he works closely with American Research Bureau (ARB) which was started by an individual who later sold this business to his employee who was Mormon. She eventually moved the business headquarters to Utah.

ARB charges a 20% fee for finding heirs. The lawyer who does the work receives his funds from ARB; but the lawyer is free to the heir.

It usually works that Mr. Owens receives a call from ARB who then sends probate petition and authorization letter to him to forward to the heir, who in turn responds back to the lawyer who becomes the "case lawyer" in most

cases. He then must go to court to present himself legally as the heir's lawyer. Courts are interested in what the testator's intentions really are as set forth in the will.

Mr. Owens had some very interesting stories to tell. One of them being of a client (an heir) who had been living on the streets for a very long time and who had a "general delivery" address in El Cerrito as the only contact. Mr. Owens wrote to him with no answer for months; then wrote again and finally got a call from him. They eventually planned to meet at Mr. Owens' office. The man came in in an old overcoat which had seen better days and he had a very shaky hand. After all the papers were signed, which took a while due to his shaky hand, he was to come back to the office and receive his funds when they arrived. It was a goodly sum of \$150,000.00. This poor man didn't trust the government (never cashed his Social Security checks), didn't trust the banks, didn't trust the lawyers, was so suspicious of everyone and everything. Mr. Owens sent another letter to let him know when the funds had arrived and they had to discuss how this heir wanted them. He didn't want it in a check form because the banks needed an I.D. to cash it and he didn't have any to speak of. This heir decided to take it in cash but he wanted it in \$1,000.00 bills (which they don't make), then \$500.00 bills (which they don't make either), so he decided he'd take \$100.00 bills. This made everyone involved a little nervous transporting such a large amount of cash - but when this heir received it he flipped through the bills (not really counting it) and stuffed it into a supermarket plastic bag, tied it, then put it into a cardboard box and went on his merry way. Mr. Owens saw him only once after this transaction and often wonders what happened to him.

A few things you might want to know: 1) A holographic will is a handwritten will signed and dated; 2) if you are an Administrator this means that there was no will and the fee is set by the state statutes; 3) inheritance laws differ in each state across the U.S.; 4) it is not a legal requirement to list all heirs in your will unless you want them all to have a piece of the pie; 5) when drawing up a Living Trust or Will list precisely who you want to receive monies

or personal property; 6) if you are ever approached by an heir-finding company saying "you are an heir" - ask for references and/or check with your own lawyer (nobody should refuse you on these accounts); 7) DNA is not admissible in heir court cases; 8) ARB often times can do a "courtesy search" if some cases warrant it; 9) ARB is located in CA, FL and NV and currently trying to get into MD and Washington, DC; 10) Funds left in the heir attorney's Trust account and never claimed will go to the state; 11) You may check on lawyers across the U.S. in the Martindale-Hubble book which rates the lawyers; 12) ARB does NOT do asset searches.

ARB consists of expert genealogists, interested experts, and a string of correspondents worldwide. ARB have clients in Europe as well as. Their website: [www:heirfinder.com](http://www.heirfinder.com).

Thought for Today

For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen [as] the representative of our country. He is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly. You may have seen him perched on some dead tree near the river, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labour of the fishing hawk; and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him . . . I am on this account not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For the truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true, original native of America . . . He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his farm yard with a red coat on.

—Benjamin Franklin,
Letter to Sarah Bache,
26 Jan 1784

11/22/2000 - Archive

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR - NOVEMBER 2005

1 Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. The Board Meeting was held at the home of Sandra Burns in Danville.

15 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.

Library Trips are NOT scheduled for November or December.

We currently need someone to be the Library Trip Coordinator. Please contact Patty Erickson if you could help out.

Without the membership showing and interest in Library trips and without a coordinator, future trips may not be scheduled in 2006.

SRVGS CALENDAR - DECEMBER 2005

o Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. The traditional pre-Christmas cookie exchange will be held at the home of Russ and Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. *All members are invited.* If you desire to do so, bring a dozen cookies or two, to share. If you need directions, please call 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net

NOTE: THERE WILL NOT BE A GENERAL MEETING OF THE SAN RAMON VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DURING DECEMBER.

NOTE: SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS DO NOT MEET DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

SRVGS Special Interest Groups November - 2005

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. Peggy Dearman is the contact person for the group. Phone 837-1621 or e-mail dearman@pacbell.net.

This group will meet Tuesday November 15 after the general meeting at about 12:30 p.m. at the home of Dorothy Stanton in Danville. Bring a bag lunch.

GERMAN - This group regularly has a monthly meeting at someone's home. On Wednesday November 30th, because of Thanksgiving and because there are five Wednesdays, the group will gather at the home of Robert and Fran Schweitzer at 10 a.m. in Walnut Creek. For further details, the contact person for the group is Fran Schweitzer 935 -5744 or e-mail franschw@pacbell.net

IRISH - This special interest group will meet November 9 (the second Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m. 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 November 8 (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 a.m.. The November 8 meeting will be held at the home of Dorothy Humpal in Danville. Members of the group will receive directions via email.

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 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 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

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

15 November Tuesday 7 pm to 9 pm

The Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society will hold its regular member meeting at the Santa Clara Central Park Library, 2635 Homestead Road in Santa Clara. "Tracing Your Civil War Ancestors" will be presented by Nyle Monday.

13 December Tuesday 7:30 pm

The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society will hold one of their regular meetings at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. "Genealogy in the Digital Age" will be presented by Bob Dougherty.

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

President:

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

1st V.P.

2nd V.P. Program:

Sandra Burns Marilyn Tanner Bob Dougherty
648-4653 376-6733 556-3302

3rd V.P. Membership:

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

Recording Secretary: Helen Odegard 925-932-6796

Corresponding Secretary:

Mary Tom 925-376-2756

Treasurer: Ed Mason 925-838-7848

Parliamentarian: Virginia Rood 925-937-8659

President's Message

By Patty Erickson

Family Traditions

Do you have family traditions for the upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas or Hanukah celebrations? Will any of these family traditions be carried on by our children, their spouses, and our grandchildren?

I have shared all our special and favorite family recipes for the holidays with my 3 children's families with the hope that they will continue the traditions.

Last Thanksgiving 2 of our older grandsons, Bryan and Derek, took over the job of making our traditional "gooey" rolls (sticky cinnamon types) from start to finish. The kitchen island was covered with flour, cinnamon, and brown sugar, but what a joy to see these 2 six foot teenage boys having a ball rolling out and cutting dough. The rolls were delicious and 2 egos were thrilled.

Our families all like to decorate for Christmas right after Thanksgiving so we can enjoy it all through December. We have Christmas Eve dinner and gifting at our home, Christmas breakfast at our daughter's and dinner at our younger son's home. (Our older son lives a distance away). We have special Christmas breads and cookies baked for the season, many with a Scandinavian tradition.

Russ' extended family had a wonderful Scandinavian Christmas Eve Open House started by his Aunt Evy when he was a child. He and all his cousins grew up with this tradition and looked forward to it each year. In her elder years, she could no longer hold this get-together and no one stepped in to keep the tradition going in the Los Angeles area. She passed away last year and only the memories of years of Open House remain.

How quickly and easily our years of traditions can fade away! I Guess we enjoy them while we can.

To all of you, a wonderful, joyous, and warm Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukah.

Patty Erickson

FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY

Health care professionals have known for a long time that common diseases - heart disease, cancer, and diabetes - and even rare diseases - like hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, and sickle cell anemia - can run in families.

If one generation of a family has high blood pressure, it is not unusual for the next generation to have similar problems. Tracing the illnesses suffered by your parents, grandparents, and other blood relatives can help your doctor predict the disorders to which you may be at risk and take action to keep you and your family healthy. To help focus attention on the importance of family health history, U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., in cooperation with other agencies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has launched a national public health campaign, called the U.S. Surgeon General's Family History Initiative, to encourage all American families to learn more about their family health history. For more information on the Family Health History Initiative go to <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory>

Remember that November is Family Health History month. Take a few minutes and talk with your family about Health History. Keep watching for a Family Health History Tool Kit produced by the Utah Department of Health at www.health.utah.gov/genomics.

Family Health Tree

To help you with your family health history, go to <http://generationalhealth.com>. You can make and print out a personal "family tree" showing your family and their health problems.

This Generational Health Web site features an important tool that can help you trace your family's medical history and become better informed about health conditions that may affect your own health and that of your loved ones.

The family health tree you build at this site can go back as far as 2 generations. As you identify some of the medical problems your relatives may

have faced, you will have the opportunity to learn more about these diseases and conditions that may be hereditary, including potential causes and the role that heredity may play in their development. Suggestions of what can be done to focus on prevention and early detection are also featured.

You may wish to talk to members of your family and share this information with them. Since this information is also valuable to your physician, you may choose to provide him or her with a copy of your family health tree. You may print out your tree, customized for your doctor, your family, or your personal use.

Expression of Sympathy

The Members of SRVGS would like to express their deepest sympathy to the family of

Jon Burditt Bryan

Jon B. Bryan passed away on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2005 at his home in Livermore. He was born on Nov. 9, 1940 in Scott City, KS. He retired from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 1993 after 30 years of service. He graduated from Kansas State University in 1968 with a Doctorate in Physics.

Jon was very active in the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. He and his wife, Gail, was also a member of our Society.

Along with his Society work, he was one of the forces behind organizing the genealogical booth at the Pleasanton County Fair.

He will be missed.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Coordinator: Dorothy Baker 925-427-4883

Email: DJBDorothy@cs.com

Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke 925-828-8570

Email: Vmseg3@greaterbaynet.com

Mailing: Lucy Carver 925-837-3146

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

Veteran's Day

The History of Veteran's Day.....

1919 - November 11: President Wilson proclaims the first Armistice Day. with the following words: "To us in America, the reflections of armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations..."

1954 - On June 1, President Eisenhower signs legislation changing the name of the legal holiday from Armistice Day to Veteran's Day.

How to Request Military Service Records or Prove Military Service

Military personnel records can be used for proving military service, or as a valuable tool in genealogical research. Most veterans and their next-of-kin can obtain **free** copies of their **DD Form 214 (Report of Separation)** and other military and medical records several ways. The recommended steps can be found on: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/get-service-records.html>

1 - Required Information

Your request must contain certain basic information for them to locate your service records. This information includes:

- The veteran's complete name used while in service
- Service number
- Social security number
- Branch of service
- Dates of service
- Date and place of birth (especially if the service number is not known).
- All requests must be **signed** and **dated** by the veteran or next-of-kin.

2 - Recommended Information (optional)

Reason for requesting information

3 - Where to send my request

You can mail or fax your **signed** and **dated** request to the National Archives's National Personnel Record Center (NPRC). Most, but not all records, are stored

at the NPRC. **Be sure to use the address specified by eVetRecs or the instructions on the SF-180.** The locations of military service records for active and retired personnel are listed at

Location of Military Service Records.

- **NPRC Fax Number :**
314-801-9195
- **NPRC Mailing Address:**
National Personnel Records Center
Military Personnel Records
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100
314-801-0800

4 - Cost:

Military personnel and health record information is usually **free** for veterans, next-of-kin, and authorized representatives. If your request involves a service fee, you will be notified as soon as possible.

***NOTE:** Some records (Navy and Marine Corps enlisted personnel pre-1939) are in the process of being accessioned into the National Archives' collection and are no longer considered part of the NPRC, but are now part of the new Archival Programs Division. Standard reproduction charges may apply for copies of these documents. The process for requesting these records remains the same for now.*

Other Methods to Obtain your Military Service Records

Other potential methods to obtain your records include writing a letter, visiting the NPRC, contacting your state or county, or hiring an independent researcher. See Other Methods to Obtain your Military Service Records for more details.

***NOTE:** Some companies advertise DD Form 214 research services and will charge a fee for obtaining copies. This is provided as a **free** service by the National Archives and Records Administration.*

STATE RESEARCH GUIDES

Family Tree Magazine State Research Guides for **Virginia and Hawaii** came be found in December - 2005 issue - starting on Page 37.

Top 5 Family Thanksgiving Traditions

Traditions are a big part of the Thanksgiving holiday, and every American family has their own way of celebrating. From stuffing the turkey to taking in a football game, here are the five most popular.

1) Turkey and Trimmings

From the first Thanksgiving to today's turkey burgers, turkeys are an American tradition dating back centuries. According to the National Turkey Federation, 95 percent of Americans eat turkey at Thanksgiving. Regional twists offer variations on the traditional roasted bird, including coffee rubbed turkey from Hawaii, salt encrusted turkey from New England, and deep fried turkey from the South.

2) Time Out for the Pigskin

Throughout the United States, football on Thanksgiving Day is as big a part of the celebration as turkey and pumpkin pie. Dating back to the first intercollegiate football championship held on Thanksgiving Day in 1876, traditional holiday football rivalries have become so popular that a reporter once called Thanksgiving "a holiday granted by the State and the Nation to see a game of football."

3) Parading Around

The first American Thanksgiving Day parade was held in 1920, organized by Gimbel's Department Store in Philadelphia, not Macy's as most people believe. The NYC Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade tradition actually began in 1924, and has grown into an annual event of balloons, bands, and floats, enjoyed by more than 46 million people each year in person and on TV.

4) Making a Wish

Does your family fight over the wishbone from the Thanksgiving turkey? Known as a "lucky break" the tradition of tugging on either end of a fowl's bone to win the larger piece and its accompanying "wish" dates back to the Etruscans of 322 B.C. The Romans brought the tradition with them when they conquered England and the English colonists carried the tradition on to America.

5) Giving Thanks

Last, but certainly not least, Thanksgiving is about giving thanks for the people and blessings of the past

year. From pre-meal prayers to providing holiday meals to the homeless, the holiday is truly a celebration of praise and thanksgiving function

A Genealogical Christmas Story

By George G. Morgan "Along Those Lines"

I can hardly believe that Christmas is here again! This time of year also makes me think of the Christmases of my youth. I suspect you do the same thing I do—remember family members and friends, family holiday traditions, special toys that made dreams come true, and a host of other details that will live in our hearts and minds forever.

Family Traditions and Genealogy

I realize that many opportunities are lost to us during the rush of the preparation for the holidays. Our own enjoyment of the events around us can sometimes blind us to preserving the very family history being created there.

If I knew then what I know now, I would have made absolutely certain that I kept a written account of as much of what I remembered of each day as possible. I would have saved the invaluable family address book, now long lost. Photographs of every Christmas tree at my parents' home and at my aunt and grandmother's home, would have been taken, developed, labeled and stored.

Family recipes are important traditions to be passed from one generation to another. I am fortunate to have some of the family recipes but some, like those "angel rolls," have been lost forever. Family china, silver and serving pieces become part of the family's heritage to be passed on. Some of these treasures, like my great-grandmother's relish dish, are boxed and labeled for posterity in my own home. Every time I see it, though, vivid memories and images of Christmas dinners long ago flash to my mind.

The Christmas Eve fire tradition has been suspended as our family has spread out but I still carry twigs from our last Christmas tree shared together for the next time we share Christmas Eve. I wish I had recorded the stories our family shared on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Over time, the details of specific individual holidays are blending

into a blur. Grandparents and parents, aunts and uncles, cousins and friends are now gone and the stories they shared are only wisps and shreds of memories in my mind. I would give anything to hear them all again—and this time I would certainly take notes or tape them!

It is important to record the events and traditions of our families for our own memories and as a heritage for future generations. Regardless of your religious affiliation or the holidays you celebrate, I hope you will seize the opportunities this season presents. Listen a little more carefully to the stories you hear and jot down details so that you can later write down as much as you possible can; make notes of names and addresses; ask relatives and friends for copies of their special recipes; recount and share your own holiday memories with other family members—especially the children.

Make this Christmas a memorable one for you and your family, and do your best to preserve this important family history forever.

Happy Holidays! George

George G. Morgan is a proud member of the International Society of Family History Writers and Editors, Inc.

"Along Those Lines" 12/23/1999 - Archive

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY HANUKKAH

San Ramon Valley
Genealogical Society
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FIRST CLASS MAIL