

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

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March - 2006

THIS MONTH - March 21, 2006

"Research In Island"

Evelyn Bentley's presentation concerns the problems and solutions of doing research in Ireland.

Understanding its history and religious background is essential in locating many available records. Suggestions will be given for ways to work around the loss of a number of Census Records and Protestant Church Records by using other kinds of records, including such valuable tax records as Griffith's Valuation Survey and the Tithe Applotment Survey. Also methods for using the Irish Immigration Records will be discussed, especially as they relate to finding the place of origin of an ancestor.

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.

FEBRUARY MEETING

"Geography and Genealogy"

Speaker: Marcia Holstrom

Reported by: Lee Schlenker

Marcia Holstrom presented her program with a lot of enthusiasm and with the skill of a part-time geography instructor. She loves her students as well as teaching geography. She interspersed her talk with humor and jokes and covered a lot of material in the hour normally allotted for speaking. You can refer to her thumbnail biography in your newsletter of February, 2006.

Marcia gave us a quick run down on why our U.S. students are not so well versed on geography today. Since geography was starting to disappear, by the 1940s geography was brought under the heading of "social science" as a curriculum which angered

many of the "old school" teachers. "Social Science" covered a wide range of topics. They felt that geography shouldn't be under that umbrella causing geography to severely decline even more. In the 1960s analytical studies were taught and that lost even more people. 1970-80s *nothing* was being taught; so the National Geographic and the Gallup did a poll and found that the 18 to 20 year old group had no geographic knowledge. And so in 1984 these Five Themes of Geography were written by the Joint Committee on Geographic Education of the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) along with the Association of American Geographers

AAG). These five themes go hand in hand with genealogy researching.

#1 LOCATION: Absolute and Relative - *absolute* is now our longitude and latitude. Also known as the grid system (rectangular boundaries) which was set up in the 1700s by George Washington in regards to Ohio's 7 Ranges and parceling out land. Even many streets are set up this way. To know the *absolute location* of a place is only part of the story. *Relative* location deals with the interaction that occurs between and among places. It refers to the many ways that places are connected - by land, by water, by technology.

#2 PLACE: Physical and Human Characteristics - *physical characteristics* include elements such as climate, topography, type of soil and natural vegetation. All places have these characteristics giving them meaning and character distinguishing them from other places on earth. (i.e. - serious flooding in the spring could cause a postponement of a baptism if the people couldn't get to the town from the country.) *Human characteristics* of the landscape can be noted in architecture, patterns of livelihood, land use and ownership, town planning and communication and transportation networks. Languages, religious and political ideologies help shape the character of a place. (i.e. - a new religion, a Swedish 3rd or 4th son wouldn't inherit the family land so he would move onto wherever he could find land of his own in the new world.)

#3 MOVEMENT: People, Goods, Ideas, Natural Features - people interact with other people, places and things every day. They migrate from one place to the other, they communicate and they rely upon products, information and ideas. It is said that "the landless have a tenancy to move." A chain migration is when one person/family settle first in new surroundings, then tell a cousin, aunt, uncle, whoever, and they move to that same place. That new person tells his/her old neighbor back home and they in turn come to live in this new town near this old neighbor. This chain migration is almost nonexistent today. There is a push/pull factor now: pull = i.e. Marcia's Swedish grandfather was going to be drafted and fled over the border to evade the draft;

push = i.e. Marcia and her husband moved to California because of his job. *Natural features* move also, i.e. movement of the winds, rivers, tectonic plates and even glaciers.

#4 HUMAN/ENVIRONMENT

INTERACTION: The environment means different things to different people, depending on their cultural backgrounds and technological resources. Geographers look at both positive and negative effects which occur when people interact with their surroundings. The *human act* of damming a river for prevent flooding or to provide irrigation can have potential consequences. (i.e. the construction of Hoover Dam changed the Colorado River's natural landscape but created a reservoir for providing water and electric power for the dry Southwest.)

#5 REGION: An area on the earth's surface that is defined by one or more unifying characteristics. This unit of geographic study is the region. Characteristics may be physical, human or cultural or a combination. (i.e. the Palatine Region, Upper/Lower Germany, Perthshire Region) You need to ask yourself - Where is it? Why is it there? Pinpointing a region with it's characteristics may help you locate your relative.

Each of these geographical "themes" seem to overlap with genealogy.

Marcia gave us a very good bibliography along with the website addresses. You might find it interesting as well as helpful in your researching.

- **Laurence J. Peter** Every man serves a useful purpose. A miser, for example, makes a wonderful ancestor.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR - MARCH 2006

- 7 Tuesday - 10:00 am. The Board Meeting** was held at the home of Marilyn Tanner in Moraga.
- 21 Tuesday - 10:00 am. General Meeting** will be held at the LDS Church on Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo. From I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east 2 & 1/2 miles.

SRVGS CALENDAR - APRIL 2006

4 Tuesday - 10:00 am. The Board Meeting
will be held at the home of a member.

18 Tuesday - 10:00 am. General Meeting
will be held at the LDS Church on Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo.

SRVGS Special Interest Groups
MARCH/APRIL 2006

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 March 21 after the general meeting at about 12:30 pm. at the home of Barbara and Jack Johnson in Danville. Please contact Peggy Dearman or Barbara Johnson for directions. Bring a bag lunch.

GERMAN - This group regularly has a meeting at someone's home on the fourth Wednesday. On March 22nd, they will gather at the home of Barbara and Jack Johnson in Danville. For further details, the contact person for the group is Fran Schweitzer; phone 935-5744 or e-mail franschw@pacbell.net. Please contact the host if you do not plan to attend. E-mail bcj616@earthlink.net.

IRISH - This special interest group will meet March 8 and April 12 (the second Wednesday) at 10:00 am. at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net for further information.

SOUTHERN - This group will meet (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 am. On March 14, they are scheduled to meet at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. Members of the group usually receive directions via email. On April 11, they plan to meet at the home of Dorothy Stanton in Danville. The contact person is Dorothy Stanton, Phone 820-3757 or email dpstant@hotmail.com. New persons interested in attending should contact Dorothy Stanton for information.

INTERNET INTEREST GROUP VIA EMAIL -

Interested members communicate and receive email messages via the 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

21 March Tuesday 7:30 pm The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society will have its regular meeting at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. Caroline Earhart will make a presentation about her family history and the quilt she made in tribute to her ancestors. NOTE THE DATE HAS CHANGED

25 March Saturday 9 AM to 4 PM
The Sacramento Genealogical Society (Root Cellar) will sponsor its spring seminar featuring John Philip Colletta, PhD at the Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church,

1427 Fair Oaks Blvd. For more information visit www.rootcellar.org or www.genealogyjohn.com
4 & 5 April Tuesday and Wednesday in Hayward Joao Ventura, a genealogist specializing in Azorean research will be sharing his expertise at free workshops in Hayward. Contact Celeste Perry at (510) 886-8855 or email ccgranmap@Juno.com
22 April Saturday The Sonoma County Genealogical Society will sponsor an all day seminar in Santa Rosa. Barbara Vines Little will be featured. Pre-register or \$ 25 registration beginning at 8 am. For further information, contact Lois Nimmo (707) 537-1684, LoisNim@aol.com or visit their web site, www.scgs.org or <http://www.rootsworld.com/~cascgs/little.htm>.

President's Message

By Patty Erickson

I can think of nothing astounding to say this month, so I will start with this question. Does our SRVGS meeting meet all your genealogical needs? If not, what should we do to help accommodate your missing needs? I am not hearing any complaints nor are board members, but one would still wonder if all is well.

One area that baffles me is the mini-education segment of our meetings - the 10 to 20 minutes between the end of the business meeting and the break. This was set up for you, the members, to share interesting genealogical news with the membership. We often think our news is not interesting enough to share. Please, stop thinking that thought. Each of us is looking for:

- new web sites
- reference books
- a new library to visit, even out of state
- someone sharing our area of interest
- something new and interesting

The lack of participation in the mini-sessions has turned into some planned mini-education sessions using our special interest groups.

The German Interest Group presented us an excellent program in February complete with hand-outs. They indicated where their family information

helped further their research.

In March, the Irish Interest Group will hopefully present an equally excellent program to you.

Do any other interest groups wish to present a program?

Marilyn King is our education chair person and is most willing to accept any suggestions for a mini education session or for 2 hour classes that will further your needs and interests.

Is there any interest in Scandinavian patronymics to help in your personal research or to show others one of the research problems in tracing Scandinavian families? (My suggestion)

PLEASE!! Speak up and let us know how we are doing and what your needs and wishes are. Only then will we be able to help you in your genealogical needs.

Patty Erickson

Thought for Today

Helen Keller

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

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 Marilynn 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

Danville Family History Center News

By Linda Bailey

The Family History Library in Salt Lake City publishes a series of wonderful research guides that can greatly help in your hunt for records. They cover a multitude of subjects, such as Locality Guides, Language Guides, Subject Guides, Maps, Forms, Reference Materials etc. There are hundreds of them.

To view the list of available guides *and* the guides themselves, go to <familysearch.org>, select the "SEARCH" tab, then select "RESEARCH HELPS". You will then see a complete list of the "Research Helps." Notice that you can SORT this list by selecting the options on the left; ie sorted by PLACE, TITLE, SUBJECT or TYPE. (I like sorting by "TYPE", then select one of the 7 Types just to the right).

When you find a Research Guide that interests you, you have several options: 1) click on the title of the document – this allows you to view the document on your browser. Remember to select the various tabs at the top of the document, too, or you will not be seeing all of the information; or 2) click on the letters "PDF" (not all are available in PDF format) to view it nicely formatted and in higher quality. You may get an "Adobe Acrobat" message pop-up, just say "OK". I prefer this format and it prints a very nice looking document; or 3) if the title is followed by an "item number", clicking on that will bring up the order form for ordering it from Salt Lake. Or, if this all is a bit too much, come to the FHC and we will sell you one from our files! Happy hunting.

Linda

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Julie LIU
516 Zenith Ridge Dr
Danville CA 94506
(925) 736-4437
soingmom@aol.com

Leila H. NIKISCHER
7624 Kilrush Ave
Dublin CA 94568
(925) 828-1174
nikialta@sbcglobal.net

German Research

Mini Education - February General Meeting

The German Special Interest Group present a short but interesting overview of some of their findings in their German research.

First, *Fran Schweitzer* gave a list of research material the group found helpful in their German research. *Bob Venter* told how he used the German telephone listing to find a relative. *Carol Huvane* reviewed pass research and found a clue she missed thus finding a new area to search. *Dorothy Baker* told her experience hiring a professional researcher. *Barbara Johnson* spoke about using the Germans to America books which are available at FHC/Oak. Years are 1850 thru 1890 or so. She used the Hamburg Emigrant Listing microfilms available from Salt Lake FH Library for further emigration information. *Margaret Koenig* talked about using the Ellis Island web site as a research tool for finding your ancestors emigration information. Some records even tell where they were going when they got to America. *Marilynn Tanner* summed the presentation up. Don't be afraid to get started and find out where in Germany your ancestors came from: Once you've found them, you can write the church in that town/village for family information, you can check international phone books to see if the family name is still present in the village, you can hire a researcher or you can go over and visit. *Don Gotthold* told of his research trip to Germany.

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.

Hiring a Professional Genealogist

So you've mined the Internet until the wee hours in the morning? You've climbed up and down the ladders at the county courthouse pulling down heavy, dusty volumes? You've spent summer vacations trekking through abandoned cemeteries full of weeds and snakes? You've rifled through all the family photographs and asked many questions of family members and you're still not satisfied with your research findings?

It is rare not to need help at some point in your family history research. Hiring a professional may be the solution. Knowing when to do so, how to prepare, what to provide the researcher, and what you can reasonably expect are key to making the venture a productive one. Following are a few tips to consider when hiring a professional researcher.

When Is It Time to Hire a Professional?

There are a number of circumstances that warrant hiring a professional. The most common is simply not being able to access records at a distant repository. Some researchers use professionals if they have a particularly complex problem they don't have the time or expertise to solve. Other more experienced researchers may wish to have another person review their work and suggest research strategies. Finally, researchers may need help discovering living relatives, as in the case of adoptions and birth parent searches. However you arrive at your decision, it is important that you contact the right person at the right stage of your research and that you provide the information necessary to secure further family information.

What Can a Professional Do for Me?

Professional genealogists offer a variety of services. The most common are researching a family's ancestry, tracing the family to an immigrant ancestor or country of origin, creating a lineage, and preparing papers for various society memberships. Some genealogists specialize in a particular geographic area, ethnic group, or time period. An experienced genealogist will be familiar with developing research strategies and evaluating records. Professionals can also help identify descendants if you are interested in writing a complete family history and want to include

all family members of a particular ancestor. Family historians are often hired by legal firms or financial institutions to establish legal heirs to an estate. Professional genealogists may work independently or for a library or archive, a research company, or a legal firm or financial institution.

Whom Should I Hire?

While there have been efforts to require certification or licensure of genealogists, especially as it relates to privacy issues and access to modern records, there is currently no uniform law regarding licensing. As a result, professional researchers may acquire their credentials from one of several organizations. In addition to these credentialing agencies, you should consider other criteria as you make your hiring decision. Most genealogists are self-taught, and many competent professionals do not seek credentials. Years of education, research experience, interests, and satisfactory service to clients may be just as important as credentials. Consult a listing for researchers in the area you are interested in and contact several of them (see page 53). Find out about their experience, their professional affiliations, and their ease of access to records. If you have a special project in mind, ask about their experience in those specialty areas. When working with a research firm, ask for the credentials of the person who will actually be doing your work.

What About Fees?

Most professional researchers will ask for an initial retainer. Find out what their practice is regarding continuing research beyond the retainer. Be specific about how much research you authorize at the outset. It is unwise to allow a project unlimited research time unless you have unlimited funds to allocate to your project. Ask for interim reports that are billed to you at the time and then make your decision regarding future research as more information becomes available. Reputable researchers will get approval from you before doing additional research or incurring expenses on your behalf. Make sure you're clear on that point before proceeding. Most researchers charge by the hour and bill for out-of-pocket expenses such as copies, vital records fees, and travel. Hourly rates vary from \$20 to \$100

depending on qualifications, market conditions, etc. Ask what is and isn't covered in the fee. Think about and come to an agreement with your researcher about the following:

- Research parameters
- Payment terms
- Continuing research
- Publication rights to the research
- Content of reports
- Goals and priorities for research

There are things you can do to control or limit your costs, including gathering as much information as you can in a clear format. Be very clear in specifying the goal of the project and commission only one report at a time. Do your own work in the interim. Ask your researcher for advice on what you can do to partner with him or her in accomplishing the research.

What Should I Provide?

To ensure that the researcher does not duplicate the work you have already done, be sure to include as much of a summary report as possible along with a family group sheet, a lineage chart, and your research log. The log should list references searched along with what you found and did not find in the records. Providing copies of key source documents is always helpful. A documented chronology of the family and critical events is a valuable tool to identify gaps in research and where information simply doesn't jive. Simply preparing the document may help you organize your thoughts and see where there are gaps in research.

Make sure you can provide evidence to support the facts you tell your researcher. Is this something that was told to you? Do you have definitive proof or is it a conclusion based on a number of pieces of information? Often the value in hiring a professional is having a fresh eye to question the results, see a missing clue, or find something that doesn't quite fit.

What Can I Expect?

One of my favorite opening lines from potential clients goes something like this: "I've relentlessly researched this family for the past thirty years and have had no luck finding my great-grandfather to date. Will you please go to the

archives tomorrow and find him for me?"

While every professional genealogist would love to rise to the challenge, they are not miracle workers. It is important to keep your research focused on a particular set of questions, to know what you want, and to communicate your priorities to your researcher. No researcher can guarantee that he or she can find your relative or can know how many hours it will take. If your researcher makes such promises, find another one. Each family history is unique and no reputable researcher guarantees results. You are paying for the researcher's time and expertise, not results.

The key to working effectively with a professional researcher is to clearly define the goals of the project, to establish priorities, and to communicate what is known and not known, and most importantly, which records have been researched.

A good research plan typically begins with an overview of the research. The researcher will need to become familiar with your family, its names, and the research that has been done thus far, so the first few hours of a project can be taken up in just studying your documents. It is typically not worth anyone's time to commission less than a day of research, unless you have a very time-limited project or simply need a record look-up.

Once complete, you can expect a documented and clearly written report summarizing what records were searched and what was found in each source, including sources where nothing was found.

Recommendations for future research along with some analysis of the findings help solidify the thoughts of both you and the researcher to determine the next step. Reports should include research notes and identification of all sources searched with negative as well as positive results. Documentation of findings, such as copies of original documents and secondary materials, may also be included.

Don't be afraid to ask questions and get clarification of any points you don't understand or that seem inconsistent.

What Happens Next?

Be open to what your genealogist tells you. Try not to let your preconceptions about what the family was,

where they were, etc., limit your thinking. A tragic example from my own experience was when a young woman asked me to locate her father shortly after the death of her mother. She had been told that her father abandoned the family when she was only two years old. After several months of painstaking research, I found a man whom I believed was her father. But he wasn't living in the state that she thought he would be and he used a slightly different spelling of his surname. My client chose not to contact the man. Three years later, she e-mailed me with the sad news. She finally decided to call the number I had provided. It was indeed her father, but he had died the year before. His widow cried at hearing her voice and told her that her father had been searching for her his whole life. The two reunited and shared what they could.

Be open. Don't let what you think you know, what you think the spelling of a name is, close your mind to the possibilities. Once you hire a researcher, you've acquired a partner that could lead you to a grand journey of discovery.

Associations for Professional Genealogists**APG Directory of Professional Genealogists**

The Association of Professional Genealogists
P.O. Box 40393, Denver, CO 80204-3093
<www.apgen.org>

Certified Genealogists

Board for Certification of Genealogists, P.O. Box 14291, Washington, D.C. 20044
<www.bcgcertification.org>

Roseann Reinemuth Hogan, Ph.D., has been researching her family history since 1978.

Ancestry Magazine - 7/1/2003 - **Archive**

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Accredited Genealogists

International Commission for the Accreditation of
Professional Genealogists (IcapGen)
P.O. Box 1144, Salt Lake City, UT 84111-1144
<www.infouga.org>

San Ramon Valley
Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 305
Diablo, CA 94528-0305

FIRST CLASS MAIL