

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. 9 April - 2006

THIS MONTH - April 18, 2006

"Land Records and Genealogical Research."

Pat Isom, a life member of SRVGS, will be our speaker this month. She will address "Land Records and Genealogical Research."

We are experiencing a new burst of enthusiasm with the abundance of geographical information becoming readily available on the WEB and other sources. What can be garnered from these records depends on how well they are understood. Pat will review the why, when, what, where and how of exploiting land records.

MARCH MEETING

"Research In Ireland"

Speaker: Evelyn Bentley

Reported by: Dorothy Stanton

Evelyn Bentley returned to give us the benefit of her experience doing research in Irish records. Previously, she spoke to us about UK records research, learned from her work as a volunteer at the LDS Hyde Park Family History Center in London. This time her talk was based on her own family research, her studies in European History and on her work as a member of the staff at the Oakland Family History Center.

Titled "Problems and Solutions to doing Research in Ireland," her talk outlined some methods for working around the tragic loss of records in Ireland following the destruction of the Four Courts Building in 1922 (suggested background reading: *Trinity* by Leon Uris). Census records start with 1901 and 1911 because earlier ones were destroyed, either by the government or by the fire in 1922. Census substitutes, church records, cemetery and land records are the main sources available. She urged everyone to consult the Family History Library's Research Outline for Ireland at the local Family History Centers or downloaded at <http://www.familysearch.org>.

Research in Ireland requires that you know the

place of origin of your immigrant ancestor so doing groundwork on this side of the Atlantic is essential. Use basic genealogical research techniques such as census records, obituaries, cemetery, church and probate records. Also, examining the origin of neighbors and friends they associated with might lead to the place of origin as they often came with others in their village or followed them to the US.

Knowing the history and geography of Ireland can help also. Mrs. Bentley's handouts listed some basic source books such as those by James, Ryan, John Grenham as well as Ira Glazier's 7 volumes on Famine Immigrants. The 20 volumes by Filby and Meyer on Passenger and Immigration List Indexes might lead to further records. Check lists for the ports of arrival such as New York, Boston, New Orleans, etc. Many came directly from Irish ports such as Cobh in Co. Cork, but some went first to Liverpool where they may have worked for a time before taking a ship to the US. It was often cheaper to go to Canada and then enter the US by ship or other means. After 1890, the records of passengers leaving England, Ireland, Scotland or

Wales are at the Public Records Office in London (Kew).

Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths in Ireland began around 1865. Before that, the Church of Ireland (Protestant) was the official keeper of records. Even if your ancestor was Catholic or Presbyterian, the Church of Ireland may have records. The FHL has films of early Civil Registration records and surviving early Church of Ireland parish registers. Catholic records seldom start before 1800 but can be accessed through the county Heritage Centers (where you must pay for a report), local parishes or on microfilm at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. A few are on microfilm from the FHL. Look in the FHL catalog under the county to see what records are available.

Tax records such as the Tithe Applotment (taxes raised for the poor), Griffith's Valuation (includes renters) are the main census substitutes. The Householders Index (at the Oakland FHC) can help locate families by surname.

As Mrs. Bentley concluded "The more you learn, the more you search, the more successful you'll become."

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR APRIL 2006

4 Tuesday- 10:00 am. The Board Meeting
was held at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill.

18 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 - MAY 2006

2 Tuesday- 10:00 am The Board Meeting
will be held at the home of Sandra Burns - Danville.

16 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 APRIL/MAY 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 April 18 after the general meeting at about 12:30 pm. at the home of Dorothy Stanton in Danville and the May meeting will be at Barbara Johnson's home in Danville. Please contact Peggy Dearman or the Hostess for directions. Bring a bag lunch.

GERMAN - This group regularly has a meeting at someone's home on the fourth Wednesday. On April 26th they will meet at the home of Helen Odegard. In May the group is planning a field trip to the Oakland Family History Center. 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.

IRISH - This special interest group will meet April 12 and May 10(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 April 11, they plan to meet at the home of Dorothy Stanton in Danville. On May 9, they are scheduled to meet at the home of Peggy Dearman in Danville. Members of the group usually 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. There are 43 members listed in this interest group. A survey is being made to rate the continued interest in this group.

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

13 April - Thursday 7:00 pm The Contra Costa County Genealogical Society will have its regular meeting at 3700 Concord Blvd in Concord. Laura Spurrier will speak about Quaker Genealogy. They regularly meet on the second thursday.

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.rootsweb.com/~cascgs/little.htm>.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Patty Erickson

Bravo to the Nominating Committee for filling the last position of our Board at the Tuesday membership meeting. And...Bravo to those wonderful members who agreed to serve on the Board. A HUMONGOUS THANK YOU to each one of you in both groups!

Rambling Thoughts:

I hope our double Irish program at the March meeting gave those researching their Irish roots enough information and incentive to begin or continue. It is NOT easy!

How is your writing progressing after Mary Jane's talk and classes? I found another warm, energetic, and encouraging writer at the last DVMUG meeting, Lauren Dunbar. I think both ladies make it sound so easy that they actually discourage us from writing. Are we afraid to sit down and write because the words just won't flow smoothly? We must delete, rewrite, and still are not satisfied. (You should see me writing this President's message each month!) Perhaps one day we will all sit down and begin our writing projects.

Do you share family pictures among your extended families, such as birthdays, holidays and other get-togethers? This came up in our family as each grandchild graduating from high school gets a DVD pictorial of his 17 or 18 years of life. That is when the comments fly about not having seen certain pictures before, and why don't they have a copy of that picture. We think a family photo session is in order to solve that problem.

Are you running out of space to store the genealogical magazines you subscribe to? I personally am overflowing even with magazine holders. I have run out of space, so I guess it is time to tackle the problem by choosing to copy or cut out the articles I REALLY want to keep. Then what happens to the rest of the magazine? Share it with interest groups? Freebie table? Recycle in the paper barrel? What do you do?

Patty Erickson

CONTINUING EDUCATION

By Marilyn King

WORKSHOP: HANDLING PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION will be given on **TUESDAY, APRIL 25** from **10:00 - 12:00 noon** by **Bob Dougherty** at his home in Dublin. There are many challenges of photographing, editing, copying, storing and filing as related to genealogy. Bob has a great deal of knowledge on these subjects. Bring your problems and solutions to share.

CLASS entitled: "**COURTHOUSE RECORDS - WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND**" will be given by **Frances Lloyd** on **MONDAY, MAY 22** from **10:00 - 12:30** at her home in Danville. This is an opportunity to learn more about this important topic. Class size is limited to ten.

SIGN UP SHEETS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE APRIL 18TH GENERAL MEETING FOR THE CLASSES SCHEDULED ABOVE.

For your information....**Linda Bailey** will be repeating her class "**FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND THE LIBRARY**" at the FHC in Alamo on Tuesday, June 27 in the a.m. Presently, there are three people on the waiting list with room for five more. Please call Marilyn King at (925) 376-1193 if you wish to attend.

ACALANES ADULT CENTER - If you are new to genealogy or need some help with your research, there are several opportunities available this spring.

GENEALOGY - BEGINNING TO INTERMEDIATE - April 12 - May 31 (08-3242) Wednesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 in Computer Room A. Fee for Seniors: \$30.00

GENEALOGY SEMINAR - CLASS DISCUSSION TO SOLVE INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROBLEMS - April 12- May 31 (08-3041) Wednesdays from 10:00 to 12 noon in Computer Room A. Fee for Seniors: \$30. Pre registration is required. Register in person or mail check to: Acalanes Adult Center 1963 Tice Valley Blvd. Walnut Creek CA 94595 Telephone (925) 280-3980 ex. 8001.

THE ROSSMOOR COMPUTER CLUB located at the Acalanes Adult Center will be offering the following seminars: **INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGY** 10:00 to 12 noon on Tuesday, April 18. **WRITING MY LIFE STORY** 10:00 to 12 noon on Tuesday, April 25. Fees for the seminars are \$10. per session. There are also several **COMPUTER CLASSES** that may be of interest. Call (925) 256-8537 for further information.

LIVERMORE ADULT ED has an ongoing class to learn about "**FAMILY TREE MAKER**". It is held on the first Thursday of the month from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. when school is in session. Call Dick Finn at 925-447-9652 or check their website at www.livermoreadulted.org if you are interested.

Marilyn King 376-1193 marmal@comcast.net

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

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Recording Secretary: Helen Odegard 925-932-6796

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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.

Danville Family History Center News*By Linda Bailey*

As you know, the Danville Family History Center is staffed with many wonderful volunteers; many from the SRVGS. They are a much-appreciated, hard working and diligent group; each bringing a different expertise and experience to the library. So it is with no small degree of sadness that we are saying goodbye to one of our dearest volunteers – Pat Isom. She and her husband, John, have been asked to work 3 days a week in the LDS Oakland mission office (located across from the Oakland temple). Pat assures me that she is hoping to be able to help out at the library if time permits. I hope so! It was Pat, as former director of the FHC, who helped take the library from a small room with a folding table and a balky computer to the facility that you see now. We owe her a lot! At least she will be close to the to the Oakland FHC and may be able to sneak in some research hours on her lunch breaks! And while I am on the subject of volunteers – let me say thank you to all the SRVGS members who are currently helping out: Harry Baggett, Ron Frye, Barbara Johnson, Jack Johnson, Claudia Mortensen, Dorothy Stanton, Chuck Rodekohr, Peggy Dearman and Suzanne Johnston. You are all greatly appreciated. *Linda Bailey, Danville FHC director*

Stories told to us

**By our relatives who lived through
The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire**

**At 109, Lucille Meyer Remembers the
San Francisco Earthquake and Fire**

Lucille Meyer is the oldest living native San Franciscan at the age of 109 (12/30/05). She was born on Montgomery Street in the North Beach area of SF on December 30, 1896.

On April 18, 1906 Lucille was staying with family friends on Easter vacation in San Mateo. Just before dawn, she and the other little girls were awakened by the great earthquake, knocked out of bed. "I could see the swinging of the lamps. Back and forth," she said.

It was clear, even to a young girl, that some-thing terrible was happening. Later in the day, the people in San Mateo saw San Francisco burning. They could see the smoke and ashes were coming down from the sky.

Her parents were at the family home at Seventh and Mission Streets. She didn't know whether her parents were dead or alive. Not long afterward, her father showed up at the door to bring her back to the city. They had a place to stay.

It wasn't bad. Others had to live in Precita Park in tents and later in tiny houses provided by the city. Even at the age of 9 she remembers it clearly. San Francisco was a mess. Everything was flattened from the Ferry Building to 20th Street.

The family moved to the Ocean View neighborhood. It was like the country in those days: small truck farms and plenty of mushrooms the kids could pick in winter.

She went to Sheridan School, but only to the eighth grade. Then she went to work knitting swimsuits and women's underwear at a factory south of Market Street. Later worked as a timekeeper for a firm that made batteries.

She married in 1924 to Norbert Meyer. He was killed four years later when a car's engine he was repairing caught on fire. She was left with two small children and one on the way. She had to go back to work to support her family by cleaning other people. She remembers the county helped out a bit: \$20 a month. The kids went to work when they were old enough: delivering newspapers, setting pins in bowling alleys, sold magazines.

She was in delicate health until age 75 when she had gall bladder surgery. After that her health improved. The Doctors are amazed. They asked her her secret. "I mind my own business. That's the secret," she replied.

Lucille Meyer lives with her daughter in Burlingame. Besides her daughter, there is a son, 14 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. She probably will not attend the 100th anniversary celebration. She doesn't like celebrations.

Aunt of Lou & Ginnie Meyer

Mother of Melissa Bernadou

My mother was living in San Francisco on April 18, 1906 when the Earthquake and Fire occurred. She was 12 years old and lived with her parents when early in the morning they were awakened by a loud noise she thought sounded like a Volcano and was very frightened. They lived high on a hill, probably Twin Peaks and had a grandstand seat watching the fire following the Earthquake. Through our large family's early years she described the many scenes vividly. In her later life she wrote a story "Journal of a Family" about our large family of 12 children and included about two pages in considerable detail about her feelings and experiences during those long hours and days following the earthquake and fire.

Contributed by Melissa Bernadou

Starting Again.....

Father of Dorothy Eggers Baker

My father, William Eggers, was 10 years old when the Earthquake struck. His family consisted of Minnie (his mother) age 35, Pearl (sister) age 8, Theodore (brother) age 6, Christian (brother) age 4, And Henry Lehman (maternal grandfather) age 68.

Ten months before the quake on July 3, 2005 William's father, Wilhelm, at the age of 37 was killed in a trolley accident.

After the earthquake, San Francisco started to burn. The officials decided the only way to save the City and stop the fire was to dynamite houses and building ahead of the fire.

The Eggers family were ordered to leave their home on Turk Street by the National Guard. Minnie dressed the children in layer after layer of clothing. She took what food she could carry and her sewing machine. Minnie became a seamstress to support her family after her husband's death. William, my father, pushed this precious item through the streets of the city to Lone Mountain. Minnie remembers waking the next morning and seeing the blackened faces of her children from the soot of the fire.

Minnie told her father and children to stay at this location while she went to look for her brother,

this location while she went to look for her brother, Theodore, who was in the National Guard and could help them.

At almost dusk, another National Guard person told the group they would have to move on to the Presidio. Grandpa Lehmann and the children did not want to go without Minnie. After much time and pleading, the Guard finally convinced them to leave, ensuring them they would be reunited. Pearl took one more look down the hill. She saw a tiny figure walking slowly toward them. It was her mother. The family was together again. They made their way to the Presidio as one.

They stayed in the Presidio until Minnie was able to get a position in a home tending to the injured. There was no gas. They had to cook in the street but they did have a roof over their heads.

They were later given one of the tiny wooden "relief" cottages (10 by 14 feet). It was later moved by the "Woodmen of the World" to a lot in the Mission District. They could start again.....

Grandparents of Marilyn King

My Grandmother and Grandfather were both living in San Francisco when the Great Earthquake occurred on April 18, 2006. Earlier that year they had been introduced to one another at a dinner party and were then married in August - four months after the disaster.

I have some wonderful memorabilia of that fateful April day including a scrapbook of pictures showing the devastation. There is a photo of my Grandmother serving soup at a makeshift sidewalk kitchen outside of their family home near the Panhandle. As was customary, the ladies always wore hats and that day was no exception. Her sister was a milliner and kept my Grandmother well supplied with beautiful accessories. I also have a letter from my Grandfather's employer giving him permission to search for his mother in the rubble. It stated that "he is not to be detained" in his search. She was later found unharmed.

Perhaps it was providential that many years ago, my father gave me this scrapbook for safe keep

ing. Little did I know that someday I would become interested in Genealogy and would be holding on to a family treasure that is not 100 years old!

The Great San Francisco Earthquake

By Kurt Laird

The exact time of the first foreshock to the "Great Quake" is recorded as 5:12 A.M. on 18 April 1906. About twenty seconds later, the earthquake began and lasted for forty-five to sixty seconds. The quake occurred along approximately 290 miles of the San Andreas fault and was felt from southern Oregon to Los Angeles and as far inland as central Nevada. Measured by our current earthquake scale, the San Francisco earthquake measured from 7.7-8.3--one of the largest ever recorded in North America and the first of twenty-seven separate quakes that day--but the quakes were just the beginning of the destruction. The damage done by the earthquake alone was estimated to be 80 million in 1906 dollars. But the earthquake was not the most destructive force; the subsequent fires that devastated San Francisco pushed the total damages to over 400 million dollars. The quake ruptured many gas lines and overturned lamps and stoves, starting fires in various parts of the city. A housewife starting up her stove to prepare breakfast started what was known as the "ham and eggs" fire.

On top of all this, the fire alarm system for the city was destroyed by the earthquake, and the fire chief was killed by the first temblor. When the firemen reported to their posts, there was little or no water to fight the flames, as most of the water-mains for the city had burst during the quake. The firemen stood by helplessly and watched many parts of the city devoured by fire. The fires lasted three full days and destroyed 2,831 acres of the city. It consumed thirty schools, eighty churches and left over 250,000 of the city's 400,000 people homeless.

The municipal government initially reported a death toll of less than 500 people, because they were afraid that any larger number would scare away investors and hinder the re-building of the city, but the actual numbers were probably more than 3,000 killed by the quake and fires. The exact death toll will

never be known because so many bodies were incinerated in the fires and almost all of the city records were destroyed.

As you search for information on the effects of San Francisco earthquakes and fires on your ancestors, you have many sources at your disposal. Here are some convenient online sources where you can begin your search.

- The Library of Congress - <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/papr/sfhome.html> - has digitized and placed online several films of San Francisco before and after the Great Quake and Fire of 1906.
- The Virtual Museum of the City of San Francisco - <http://www.sfmuseum.org/1906/ew.html>
 - has posted over thirty eyewitness accounts of the event.
 - A concise review with incredible photos and eyewitness accounts of the events before, during, and after the San Francisco Earthquake and Fires can be found at Exploratorium.com. <http://www.exploratorium.edu/faultline/great/1906/index.html>
- Dorothy Fowler's work, *A Most Dreadful Earthquake: A First-Hand Account of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire* presents the vivid personal letters of a young San Francisco woman to her sweetheart in Schenectady, New York. Using standard genealogical methods, Fowler was able to identify the parties involved and uncover a fascinating link to America's recent past. Available online here.
- As the 100th Anniversary of the Great Quake approaches, an effort is being made by San Francisco's Virtual Museum to gather everything connected to the 1906 Quake in one place. If you have any piece of history related to the Great San Francisco Quakes and Fires, visit their site above, see how you can help this effort.

Researching Other Events Researching how your ancestors were affected by natural disasters requires

that you first learn as much as possible about the event. You can then begin to infer the consequences of the disaster on your ancestors. Sometimes the easiest way to begin is to perform a simple Google search on the event.

Kurt Laird was previously the technical editor for the *Ancestry Daily News* and *Ancestry Weekly Digest*, and the editor for the *Ancestry Monthly Update*, *MyFamily Weekly Update*, and *Genealogy.com Member Newsletter*. He has also written articles and been a contributing editor for *Ancestry Magazine*.

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Display of Earthquake artifacts
Will be at our April 18th meeting
Please bring any items or photos
YOU have for the display to the
the meeting.

Our speaker in June will be
Nancy Peterson from CGS who
Will speak about her book
"Raking The Ashes" about finding
Records after the Earthquake

Oakland Museum of California Exhibit

"Aftershock! Voices from the 1906 Earthquake & Fire"
April 1 to Aug. 13th Artifacts and Photographs
www.museumca.org for more information

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

"1906 Earthquake: A Disaster in Pictures" through May 21st
www.sfmoma.org for more information

Legion of Honor Museum

"After the Ruins, 1906 and 2006: Rephotographing the
San Francisco Earthquake & Fire"
<http://www.thinker.org/legion/index.asp>

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