

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 305

Diablo, CA 94528-8308

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. 10 May - 2006

THIS MONTH - May 16, 2006

"Using Online Census Indexes: A Comparison of *Ancestry* and *Heritage Quest*"

If you've never failed to find an ancestor in a census index, you may not need the information presented here. If someone consistently eludes you, however, come learn the strengths and weaknesses of the two major online census indexes, and pick up a few tricks that may help you increase your census search success rate.

Susan G Johnston graduated from Yale with a degree in physics and followed this with a stint at Peabody Conservatory studying voice. After her children were born, she discovered genealogy - an avocation that satisfied her love of research and that didn't require grant writing. Susan is a graduate of the National Institute on Genealogical Research, the Advanced Methodology course at Samford's Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research, and the National Archive's course, *Going to the Source*. She taught courses in introductory and advanced genealogy for many years before moving with her husband from Maryland to Fremont, in 2004. Although she doesn't miss the weather back East, she does miss her frequent visits to the National Archives.

APRIL MEETING

"Texas Ranch House"

Speaker: Lisa Cooke

Reported by Lee Schlenker

In case you think this is the report on "Land Records and Genealogical Research" with Pat Isom - *it just is not!* We had a most wonderful change in our program this April when Pat isom announced that she wanted to introduce Lisa Cooke, who, she thought, had a most interesting topic to tell us about. So, maybe at a later date, Pat will get back to us on Land Records.

Lisa Cooke, formerly with the Danville FHL, Had a very interesting summer with her family. Loving genealogy and history, she likes to go one step more and beyond - as her family found out. She has always enjoyed the "house stories" series on PBS and checked frequently on the internet as to when the next "house series" would be showing. Instead she found that they were looking for people to be on a new "house series" they were interested in doing. So, she

brought her idea up to her family who felt she should do this and apply just to see what would happen. She applied over the internet and the next day she received a call from PBS. Eventually, PBS wanted the *whole* family (5 persons) to be their "house" family. After a lot of haggling with family members, they all gave Lisa the Okay! So, a summer was spent in west Texas out on a 47,000 acre cattle ranch set in 1867 with 5 family members, 7 cowboys, 2 cats, 1 dog, 2 milk goats, 2 pigs, 8-10 meat goats, and 2 milk cows. Now, this setting was after the Civil War, after the slaves were freed, and the Longhorn cattle had been running wild. Nothing was scripted. They were forced to use a whole lot of common sense. There was no story-line to speak of for this show. Whatever happened, happened!

So, off all five went - to boot camp! They

had to learn how to ride horses and had two *real* cowboys there to assist. Then they were outfitted in period costumes. When boot camp was finished the family went into town and to register their cattle ranch "brand" in the courthouse. When they finished the van took them down a regular street, onto a gravel road, then there was no road at all, but the van kept going. They were dropped off at the stage coach stop (in the middle of nowhere), rode the stage to within one mile of the ranch and walked that mile. Lisa said the ranch house was considered elaborate with its two bedrooms, parlor, open kitchen and master bedroom. An arbor had been fashioned out back between the square-U shaped house with beams across the top and the breezes came from that direction so many meals were eaten outside. It was another three weeks before they received items that they had contracted to be brought out as well a better food rations and supplies. Lisa said the cowboys claimed they were being starved by her cooking. She had no recipes to guide her. Being the summer in Texas Lisa opted to do all her cooking in the domed-shaped fireplace with a Dutch oven. She became proficient with the Dutch oven. She had a nice iron stove but it heated the house and took too long to get hot enough to use. So it became her "storage stove" because it kept the flies away. She had also read that cats were a great security alarm for rattlesnakes and requested two cats. Well, she got two little kittens but they did their job and one day dinner was with rattlesnake meat (an 11 year old, 7 foot rattler).

Each person had chores which had to be preformed each day around the house. Her girls milked the goats and cow, collected mesquite wood for the fire. They wash with lye soap (beef tallow and ashes) - everything! hair, clothes, dishes, body. She said her hair got so thick with grease she could hardly get a comb through it and then had to clean the comb for hours so it could be used again. Lisa taught herself how to make cornhusk dolls and she did quilting - all these to sell for funds. They all learned to make cheese from the cow's and the goat's milk. She and her girls also mended and made, without patterns, shirts for the Buffalo soldiers (the emancipated Black men) who came by. The soldiers

told stories of how proud they were to have a good life with a bed in a tent, food and respect for helping to build new forts. And then there were the Comanche Indians who stole some of their horses and kidnapped one of their wranglers. The Indians told stories from the 1800s.

During afternoons when the work was done for a while, Lisa and her girls would remove their heavy dresses, go into the parlor, draw the curtains (to keep it cooler) and they would listen to one read "Lady in White" (1865) sitting on the softest spot in the parlor - a velvet settee. Each would sew or create while listening to the story. They almost read the whole book that summer!

They had to contend with huge lightening storms in the summer. The storms would come upon them so fast they hardly had time to run for cover. And often they were flooded with rain. The production crew for PBS would run for cover also in the downpours and would not be back for two days because of flooding.

One of the hardest things to deal with was dehydration. They had a burlap bag filled with water hung under the arbor where the breeze could blow and cool the water. It never was icy cold but it did get cool enough to enjoy.

Lisa told us many of the behind-the-scenes stories which made us really laugh. But she concluded that ranching is a partnership between the women holding down the home while the wranglers did their job with the cattle. One could not survive without the other.

She is hoping to write her memoirs about the "lady of the house" on this Texas ranch. Her family really loved that summer and the majority of them would like to live on a ranch.

This "Texas Ranch House" will air on May 1-4th on PBS. It is a two hour series for four days running. Lisa has a website: cookefamilywebsite.com. And you can check www.PBS.org website for information on their shows and times.

Lisa Cooke was a real treat for this month's meeting!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR - MAY 2006

2 Tuesday – 10:00 am. The Board Meeting

was held at the home of Sandra Burns in Danville.

16 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. The speaker for May will be: Susan G. Johnston - "Using Online Census Indexes: A Comparison of *Ancestry* and *Heritage Quest*"

SRVGS CALENDAR - JUNE 2006

6 Tuesday – 10:00 am. The Board Meeting

is currently scheduled to be held at the home of Ed Mason in Alamo.

20 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 MAY/JUNE 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 May 16 after the general meeting at about 12:30 pm. at the home of Barbara Johnson in Danville. Please contact Peggy Dearman or the Hostess (837-2153) for directions. Bring a bag lunch.

GERMAN - This group regularly has a meeting at someone's home on the fourth Wednesday. 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.

IRISH - This special interest group will meet May 10 and June 14 (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 May 9, they will meet at the home of Peggy Dearman (837-1621) in Danville. On June 13, they plan to meet at the home of Dorothy Humpal (735-3310) 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. This is still an active group. Please refer to the message transmitted on April 23 or later to be sure you have all of the current e-mail address changes and member additions.

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

23 May Tuesday 1:00 pm The Sacramento German Genealogical Society will have one of its regular meetings at St. Mark's Methodist Church, Lusk Drive & St. Mark's Way in Sacramento. Ingeborg Carpenter will speak about "Gadgets, Contraptions, and Whatchamacallits That Your German Ancestors Could Hardly Have Lived Without"

13 June Tuesday 7:30 pm The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society will have its regular meeting at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. Margaret Toth will make a presentation about Breaking Down Stone Walls

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Patty Erickson

May 31st is the official end of our fiscal year. I would like to express my THANKS to each of you for making this an excellent year. My excellent year has been possible for two reasons. First, a conscientious board and second great members who faithfully attend our meetings and classes.

There are also several quiet but hard working members behind the scenes. These members keep our level of excellence alive.

Ed O'Donnell handles publicity very well now for 10 plus years. Ed keeps various communities aware of our meeting dates and speakers by notices in all the local papers and TV community bulletin boards.

Dorothy Baker edits our newsletter. How could we function without this superb newsletter, the heart line of our society?

Vern Segelke does the newsletter calendar. Vern keeps our special interest groups on schedule plus alerting us to other Society meetings and seminars.

Lee Schlenker, our speaker reporter keeps us informed and does such an excellent job summarizing our speakers that we never miss the important things our speakers had to say!

Bob Daugherty comes early each meeting day

to set up our electronics and microphones, computers, projectors and screens. he also takes photos when our historian is absent.

Nancy Alexander, our Historian, continues the photo history of our society.

When you see all these people at meetings, give them a "Thank You" for a job well done.

The members of SRVGS
wish to express their
sincere Sympathy
to the families of

Melissa Bernadou

of San Ramon

And

Jeanette Marie Taggart Holmes

March 3, 1923 - April 27, 2006

She died peacefully of heart failure in the early morning hours on Thursday, April 27, 2006 in San Ramon, Ca. at the age of 83. She was the mother of 5 children.

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

The Nominating Committee would like to present the following people who have volunteered to lead the SRVGS for the 2006-2007 year. Election will be held at our next meeting - May 16th.

**SLATE OF OFFICERS NOMINATED FOR
2006-2007**

President:	Patty Erickson
First Vice President:	Barbara Dittig
Second Vice President: (Programs)	Robert Dougherty Kathy Javdani
Third Vice President: (Membership)	Ileen Peterson
Recording Secretary:	Carol Huvane
Corresponding Secretary:	Sandra Burns
Treasurer:	Ed Mason
<u>New Positions:</u>	
Mini Education:	Sandra Burns
Web Master:	Ed Mason

**IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER -
by Erma Bombeck**

(written after she found out she was
dying from cancer)

I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I weren't there for the day.

I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage.

I would have talked less and listened more.

I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained, or the sofa faded.

I would have eaten the popcorn in the 'good' living room and worried much less about the dirt when

someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace.

I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.

I would have shared more of the responsibility carried by my husband.

I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed.

I would have sat on the lawn with my grass stains.

I would have cried and laughed less while watching television and more while watching life.

I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil, or was guaranteed to last a lifetime.

Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now go get washed up for dinner." There would have been more "I love you's." More "I'm sorry's."

But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it. live it and never give it back. Stop sweating the small stuff. Don't worry about who doesn't like you, who has more, or who's doing what.

Instead, let's cherish the relationships we have with those who do love us.

Let's think about what God HAS blessed us with. And what we are doing each day to promote

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.

TO DO LIST**Switch from People to Places**

If you're stuck on a particular ancestral line, try moving your investigation from the people to the places they lived. Using your favorite search engine, seek information on the city, neighborhood or town, institutions like churches, schools and organizations that existed when your ancestor was there.

Look for local histories that may be posted on the websites of municipalities, congregations, chambers of commerce, businesses, schools and universities, etc. Doing so will not only give you some insight into what their lives were like, it will broaden your knowledge of the area and possibly alert you to new avenues of research.

Record Heirloom Origins

As you're doing your "spring cleaning," and dusting around all those family heirlooms, take a photograph and take time to record the origins and any stories associated with them. Create an album with photographs and the histories of all your precious items. That way the stories won't become lost as time goes by.

Begin an Outline for a Biographical Sketch

Pick an ancestor or family and start work on a narrative. Don't worry about grammar and syntax, just start with the facts—vital dates and places, places you've found them in censuses and directories, occupations, historical events that took place and may have affected them—anything you have on record and any facts that come to mind. Arrange them chronologically and fill in as much as you can. As you progress, you'll start to see their story take shape and you may just pick up some clues for further research along the way!

Share a Family History Find

Have you located a record that might interest another family member? Why not take a couple of minutes to make a copy and send it to them? By keeping the lines of communication open, you are staying connected with family members who may be able to help you out with your research down the road. And who knows, they may respond with an important memory that the record prompted. Try it!

Changes to Note

Claudia Mortensen: New Email camgeni@aol.com

New Address: Dorothy Baker
1300 Singingwood Ct. #6
Walnut Creek, CA 94595
925-952-9691

Organizing Favorite Websites**Ancestry Quick Tip** by Midge Waters

I just finished reading my new *Ancestry Daily News* that included the quick tip from Mary Jo Look. I do something similar to keep my favorite websites handy, but as a retired librarian, my instinct was to use 3x5 cards in a file, so that I could sort the cards anyway I wanted. Since I research in several countries, and assist with workshops for those areas, I sort by location (Norway, Sweden, etc.), and then alphabetically. Using library rules for filing works fine.

In order to find a certain kind of website easily, I use a marker to color a short bit on the top edge of the card. For instance, if it is for a dictionary, lexicon, or translation, I use a red marker. For maps, and other geographic locators, a blue marker, and so forth. Other subjects that I highlight in this way are obituaries, cemetery, funeral topics, genealogical forms, programs, systems, emigration and passenger lists, bulletin boards and newsletters that I need to check frequently, and also travel and cultural sites. Websites that don't fit into my foreign categories are kept in a separate shoebox, by subject and then alphabetically. I find this system very useful for me, since I also like to keep some notes on the reverse of the cards. By dating my last check of a site, I know how far back in the archives I must look, etc. Keeping track of your findings at each site prevents you from covering the same territory again and again. January 28, 2005

In Honor Of Memorial Day

The Tomb of the Unknowns

1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and Why?

21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?

21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1.

3. Why are his gloves wet?

His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not?

He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

5. How often are the guards changed?

Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30". Other requirements of the Guard: they must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform (fighting) or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the

wreath pin.

The shoes are specially made with very thick Soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis (the boxer) and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, (the most decorated soldier of WW II) of Hollywood fame.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.

ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD,
AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE
UPON THEM.

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington, DC, our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend The assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a serviceperson. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.

"According to the Guinness Book of World Records, the Confucius family genealogy is considered to be the longest documented genealogy in the world. Confucius lived from 551 to 479 B.C. and his fourth-great-grandfather, K'ung Chia, lived in the 8th century B.C. There are seven documented direct descendents of Chia who are alive. They trace their ancestry back 86 generations."

A Mother's Voice

Momma kept all her old black & white pictures in a box. I didn't know who the photographs were, so one day while visiting my Momma I sat down with her & asked her to identify the pictures. One at a time she told me who was in each picture & bits of information about the past. As she talked I noted their names on the back of each photograph.

A few years later I asked my Momma to sit down with me & tell me stories about her family & her past. I turned on my tape recorder. She began to talk. She had a French accent that I loved. She told me stories about how she chauffeured her daddy around in the old Model-T on the plantation. She gave me names, dates, and descriptions as she talked about the past as if it were yesterday. She told me little stories about relatives that only I know and am able to pass on. Things like the fact that my great-grandfather had curly hair & penetrating blue eyes. He would get up & ride a horse on the plantation everyday but his wife would have to saddle the horse for him.

We laughed while recording the tape. My brother & his son came over while we were recording. They joined in asking questions & laughing as Momma filled us in on her childhood memories. My two-year-old sat on the floor with my nephew who asked his Grandma important questions like, "Maw Maw, how many cows did y'all have on the plantation?" It was a good day.

Years have passed & my Momma & brother have passed away. My son is now twenty-five & my nephew is thirty. I still have the tape we made that day. I can listen to my Momma talk with her French accent even now. I did have to remake the tape since time seems to have worn the tape down. But, I do have something important to me from my past that I can give to other family members so they can know their grandma, her voice and listen to the stories I us to here her tell as we sat around her rocking chair when I was a child.

Ancestry Quick Tip - Staff Writer - Joyce 8/5/2005

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