

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. XXII No. 1 June - 2006

THIS MONTH - June 20, 2006

"Raking The Ashes" - Genealogical Strategies for Pre- 1906 San Francisco Research"

Nancy Peterson is a nationally certified genealogist and author of numerous articles in prominent genealogical periodicals, including the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*. In 1998, she won the National Genealogical Society Family History Writing Contest and in 2003, the American Society of Genealogists Scholar Award. Nancy received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Stanford University, and was employed there many years prior to moving from the San Francisco Bay Area to the Pacific Northwest in 1986. She taught beginning and intermediate genealogy, and for six years was editor of the Tacoma-Pierce County quarterly *The Researcher*.

Since returning to the Bay Area in 2004, she has directed most of her research toward uncovering details regarding her mother's pre- and post-Gold Rush San Francisco immigrant German, Irish and Cornish roots.

"Raking The Ashes: Genealogical Strategies for Pre-1906 San Francisco Research" is a new book that is the must-have handbook for researchers. It was written by Nancy Peterson to provide strategies for dealing with record losses wherever they occur, and to help solve genealogical stumbling blocks. It presents numerous illustrative graphics and abundant historical detail and statistics. It provides up-to-date descriptions of archival collections available, includes illustrations of typical and not-so-typical records, and tells exactly what to expect from records and where to find them. Its usefulness is not limited to San Francisco, as it contains instructional materials applicable to genealogical problem-solving anywhere.

MARCH MEETING

"Comparisons of Ancestry and HeritageQuest Online"

Speaker: Susan Goss Johnston

Reported by: Lee Schlenker

Our speaker for May was **Susan Goss Johnston** Who spoke to us on the comparison of both online Indexes - HeritageQuest and Ancestry. Both are great tools if you know how to navigate through them. An Alameda County Library card gives you access to HeritageQuest. But lately it has been a little hard to access. And Ancestry is also available at libraries.

Susan tried to point out some things you need to be aware of when searching for your ancestors. Both Ancestry and HeritageQuest contain the 1790 to 1820 census indexes. Ancestry has the 1830 to 1840

census indexes plus the 1840 military service field. 1850 census index (every name) is available on Ancestry plus new and useful variables (place of birth and year of birth). 1860 to 1870 are both available on Ancestry and HeritageQuest. The 1880 census index is available on Ancestry and FamilySearch.org. 1900 to 1920 indexes available both on Ancestry and HeritageQuest. Before 1900 everything was handwritten. After 1900 more things were typewritten. When you view any census you are viewing the 2nd or 3rd copying of that census which makes it wide

open for human errors. It may not have been copied by the original enumerator. If you can't find somebody in the census index they could have been missed by the census taker (7 to 20% of the population was under counted)< by the census indexer or by you the census user. Learn the spelling variants of your names of interest (i.e. Anderson vs. Andersen) and learn the visual variants of those names also. Often times "n" becomes "r" or an "s" for an "n" for the transcriber. Capital Letters can be misread then misspelled (i.e. Crane to Cram or Gram for Croan). Then there is the phonetic spelling of a name be it a surname or a given name. When you input your information you can use search "filters" as in a book index using surnames only, or in one field or combination of fields to create a "filter". A filter should be general enough to contain the subject but specific enough to get the information you'll need. So to use "wildcards" in Ancestry you use a "?" for one character only and not within the first three letters of the name, or use the "*" as a wildcard for 0 to 6 characters in the name. Wildcards will work in any text field.

You can't believe everything you read on the census. Susan showed us on an index in the birthplace column was "Ken" and then ditto marks down that column. Whoever input that index assumed everyone was from Kenya and that certainly wasn't true - they were from Kentucky! Human error.

When Lsus did a comparison summary it read like this:

Accuracy: Heritage Quest - wins hands down.
 Coverage: Ancestry - complete index coverage; every name indexed for most
 Flexibility: Ancestry has soundex and wildcard searches, extra variables.
 Initials: Handled best by Ancestry
 Illegible Entries: Handled consistently by HeritageQuest
 Abbreviations: Okay in both
 Mc/Mac Names: Not handled consistently in either index
 Search Form: Most consistent in HeritageQuest
 Search Output: Can be controlled in HeritageQuests; useful research tool

User Corrections: Available in Ancestry

Susan says to use all available indexes. Don't forget your good research principles. Always assume your subject is in the index. If you *know* your subject is there you are more likely to find them. The more you know about a family, the more likely you are to find it in the index. And keep an accurate record of where you searched and how you went about that particular search (listing your variable names). Then you won't duplicate your searching and will save yourself a little time.

Two-part article "Using Online Census Indexes: A comparison of Ancestry and HeritageQuest" was published by the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society in the Livermore Roots Tracer and posted online at: <http://www.l-ags.org/>

The Preacher came to call the other day. He said, at my age I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him, "Oh, I do, all the time. No matter where I am, in the parlor, in the kitchen, or in the basement, I ask myself: What am I hereafter!"

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

President:

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

1st V.P.

Barbara Dittig 925-648-9364

2nd V.P. Program:

Bob Dougherty 925-556-3302
 Kathy Javdani 925-736-5464

3rd V.P. Membership:

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

Recording Secretary: Carol Huvane 925-947-5669

Corresponding Secretary:

Sandra Burns 925-648-4653

Treasurer: Ed Mason 925-838-7848

Parliamentarian: Virginia Rood 925-937-8659

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR

JUNE 2006

6 Tuesday 10:00 am. The Board Meeting

was 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. From I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east 2 & 1/2 miles. The speaker for June will be Nancy Peterson. She will be speaking about her new book: "Raking The Ashes: Genealogical Strategies for Pre-1906 San Francisco Research"

SRVGS CALENDAR - JULY 2006

10 Monday 10:00 am. The Board Meeting

will be held at Bob Dougherty's house in Dublin.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN DATE

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

JUNE-JULY 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@earthlink.net . Please NOTE the new e-mail address.

This group will meet Tuesday, June 20 after the general meeting at about 12:30 pm. at the home of Peggy Dearman in Danville. Please contact the Hostess for directions. Bring a bag lunch.

GERMAN This group will not meet during June, July or August. This group usually has a meeting at someone home on the fourth Wednesday. Fran Schweitzer is the contact person for the group. Phone 935-5744 or e-mail franschw@pacbell.net.

IRISH This special interest group will meet June 14 (the second Wednesday) at 10:00 am. at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. (925) 229-0889

or e-mail russpat@comcast.net for further information. This group will not meet during July or August.

SOUTHERN This group will meet (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 am. 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 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. This is still an active group. Please refer to a recent message to be assured that 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

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

27 June 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. Susan Jackman will speak about "Meet Sacramento's Family History Center - What's There? What Should You Know More About? What's Coming Down the Road?"

13 July Thursday 7 p.m.

The Contra Costa County Genealogical Society will have one of its regular meetings at the Concord/Walnut Creek LDS Church, 3700 Concord Boulevard in Concord. Rick Lemyre and Marilyn Merry will make a presentation and set up an exhibit about the Civil War. He is editor of Brentwood Times (etc.!!!) and a Civil War enthusiast. She has a collection of letters and memorabilia from an ancestor who was in the Civil War.

18 July Tuesday 7 p.m.

The Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society will have one of its regular meetings at The Santa City Library, 2635 Homestead Road in Santa Clara. Kathleen Orlenko will speak about "Handling and Storing Our Heirlooms." Ms. Orlenko is an archives conservator.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE TAKING GENEALOGY TOO SERIOUSLY IF.....

You are the only person to show up at the cemetery research party with a shovel

Your house leans slightly toward the side where your genealogical records are stored.

You decided to take a two-week break from genealogy, and the US Postal Office immediately laid off 1,500 employees.

A magical genie appears and agrees to grant you any one wish, and you ask that the 1890 census be restored.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Patty Erickson

A Welcome to our new Board members: Barbara Dittig - First Vice-President (how wonderful to have a Vice-President!); Carol Huvane - Recording Secretary; Kathy Javdani - Program Committee. Another great board! I am looking forward to working with each of you.

As I have mentioned before, we are always open to your suggestions. If you are planning a research trip this summer or setting aside time for a genealogical brick wall problem solving adventure, please share your findings with us. I would like to have the mini-education session filled each month with both your findings and your problems. Sandra Burns is the person to call when you are ready to share with our Society.

HAPPY RESEARCHING!

Helen Keller, U.S. blind and deaf educator, 1880-1968 There is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Library Orientation Class at the FHC in Alamo is scheduled for Tuesday, June 27 from 10:00 to 12:00 noon. The session is full at this time. If you have signed up and are not able to attend, please call Marilyn King at 376-1193.

Many thanks to our members who have shared their knowledge with us this past year. Frances Lloyd, Bob Dougherty, Harry Baggett and Linda Bailey have educated us on one or more subjects.

Additional classes will be scheduled this fall. Several topics are being considered so be sure to watch for further announcements. Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Marilyn King - Education Coordinator
marmal@comcast.net

Alameda County Fair

Preparations are being made for the seventh year of demonstrating the marvels of online genealogy research to the public at the county fair in Pleasanton. The dates of the Fair are June 23rd to July 9th. The "genealogy booth" will be in the air-conditioned Technical Adventures Building (called Special Exhibit Building F. We will share the booth with Livermore Genealogical Society, Tri-Valley Macintosh Users Group, Amador-Livermore Valley Historical Society and the DAR.

We need volunteers either to sit down with fairgoers and work the computers, or those who could greet the public and write down information that will help the computer staff.

If you would like to volunteer there is a Web page that will allow you to sign up online for the days and hours you want to serve. There will also be orientation classes for those who want to work the computers. We also need volunteers to set up and take down the booth. There will be free admission and parking tickets provided for the volunteers.

There will be two PC and two Mac computers available for use.

It is fun to help others discover genealogy, plus you will learn WHILE helping others.

You can sign up for a three hour shift by going to www.L-AGA.org/Fair2006

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Coordinator: Dorothy Baker 925-952-9691

Email: DJDorothy@comcast.net

Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke 925-828-8570

Email: Vmseg3@greaterbaynet.com

Mailing: Lucy Carver 925-837-3146

Deadline to put information in the Newsletter is the Last Thursday of the month.

Members are encouraged to submit articles for the Newsletter by mail or email to Coordinator.

San Francisco Funeral Home Records

From: "Ron Filion" <ron@sfgenealogy.com>

To: <NORCAL-L@rootsweb.com>

Sent: Sunday, May 14, 2006 5:43 PM

Subject: [NORCAL] Researchity

A few months ago, we heard about some records that were going to be destroyed from local, well known San Francisco funeral homes. We couldn't believe it!!! So, Pamela and I sprung into action and asked if we could have them. The owners were very glad to find a local genealogy organization interested in taking them. So, we eventually signed a contract and took possession of the records. We are now coordinating with the LDS to get them digitized! But, that will take quite awhile. We also hope to find a permanent repository for paper version.

The companies include: Carew & English, Gantner-Felder-Kenny, Gantner-Maison-Domergue, Julius S. Godeau, Halsted & Company, H.F. Suhr Company, Martin & Bown, and N. Gray & Company.

Our records consist primarily those after 1920 (with some exceptions). The ones before our dates are supposedly going to San Francisco Public Library (History Center) and are planned to also be digitized by the LDS>

In the meantime, in order to cover the costs of storage (we are talking hundreds of boxes, thousands of records), transportation, etc., we have started a completely separate venture called "Researchity." So. Please feel free to take a look and see if we have someone you might need: www.researchity.com

Regards,

Ron Filion and Pamela Storm Wolfskill

Quotes

Jeff Foxworthy: If you ever start feeling like you have the goofiest, craziest, most dysfunctional family in the world, all you have to do is go to a state fair. Because five minutes at the fair, you'll be going, "You know, we're alright. We are dang near royalty."

Thomas Overbury, 1581-1613 The man that hath not anything to boast but his illustrious ancestors is like a potato: the only good belonging to him is underground.

"THERE'S A LOT OF THAT GOING AROUND"

WARNING: GENEALOGY POX
(Very Contagious to Adults)

SYMPTOMS: Continual complaints as to need for names, dates, kinships, and places. Patient has blank expression - sometimes deaf to spouse and children; Has no taste for work of any kind except feverishly looking through records at libraries and court houses; Has compulsion to write letters; Swears at mailman when he doesn't leave any mail; Frequents strange places, such as cemeteries, ruins, and remote desolate country areas; Makes secret night calls; Hides phone bill from spouse; mumbles to self; Has far away look in eyes.

TREATMENT: Medication is useless; Disease is not fatal but gets progressively worse; Patients should attend genealogy workshops, subscribe to genealogy magazines and be given a quiet corner in the house where he/she can be alone.

REMARKS: The unusual nature of this disease is - the sicker the patient gets, the more he enjoys it.