SAN RAMON VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 305
Diablo, CA 94528-8305
President: Ed Mason
Coord. Editor: Bob Venter
Meetings: 10:00 a.m.
3rd Tuesday of the Month
(Except August & December)
Diablo Family History Center
Stone Valley & Smith Rds., Alamo
http://srvgensoc.org/index.html

San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society Vol. XXIII No. 3 September – 2007

THIS MONTH – September 18, 2007
"Old Family Photos"

Sandra Harris will be our guest speaker this month. She and her husband operate a small photographic studio in Sacramento. They do quite a bit of photo copying and restoration. When a genealogical society asked her to do a program on dating old photographs, it led into a hobby of genealogy, and she has been doing it for many years. She has helped people in Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Australia, Africa, France and almost every state in the U.S. Our members have sent many old family photos for her to date, and it sounds like a very interesting meeting.

"City Directories"
Speaker: Cathy "Cat" Nielson Reported by: Lee Schlenker

Cathy (aka "Cat") Nielsen, as mentioned in the June Newsletter, has a *huge* pedigree in many different fields and is currently working on obtaining her Professional Genealogist certification.

She started out by asking us, "who has used city directories?" Only a chosen few of us seemed to have used them and then not to their fullest extent! Then Cat launched into what exactly is contained in a city directory with her "power point presentation." Directories were used mainly by businesses such as banks, retail stores, etc. within that particular city or county. These directories were usually organized by the city and if the city was small then they were organized by the county in which that city resided. The earliest city directory was know to be published in 1790 - which was in New York. In England they were started about 1830.

Sutro in San Francisco had many city directories but now has them on microfilm and the actual books are housed at the California Genealogy Society in Oakland. Directories can be found in libraries, historical society collections, and private collections.

Cat suggested you look very closely at the **front** of the directory to start. The **spine** of the book gives you information (along with paid advertising).

Read the **title page** and find *what, where, when*; continue on to the **table of contents or index** (Sacramento's directory lists government and offices) there are banks, cemeteries, churches listed; you will find fraternal organizations (i.e. Masons, Odd Fellows) and the place, days and time that they met; hospitals, schools, libraries, etc; Unionists. There is an **abbreviations** page where you will find codes used beside names when appropriate. **People** are

next; pre-1920 directories listed men, widows and single women and by 1922 California listed the wife's name next to her husband; you could track a person through the years just see their career progress in that city (i.e. Cat tracked a 17 year old boy in 1876 until he was 31 and owned his own tobacco shop in the city); you could usually tell when people moved (you might find the word "removed" listed by their name); often rural routes were listed (farmers, owners or laborers often with a description of the property and information about that area such as a post office or the stage coach schedule might be listed). The **back of the book** contained the yellow pages with employer entries. You might need old maps to aide in finding the street in some areas since street names may have changed through the years (i.e. Grove Street in Oakland was later changed to Martin Luther King, Jr. Way). In the 1900's householders were listed but this can vary by city directory. Often there might be a cross street reference.

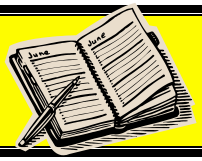
Cat told us that information will vary by time and by the publisher since each directory had a different publisher. Some were published by Polk, some by Hustead, some by the town/city or county itself The individuals rechecking each year and verifying names to the addresses were sketchy. She described them as the equivalent of the census taker or the enumerator. If they felt it was still a good address plus occupant they may have just "ticked" it off on their card or sheet. If you weren't at home often a neighbor might be asked. Sketchy stuff!

By the 1970's our phone book of today has probably done away with the city directories.

When the 1930 Census was released it had not been indexed and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) called for cities nationwide to send their directories (circa 1930's) to be photocopied then returned. Salt Lake City has many on microfilm. What you find at Sutro you will probably find at the Sacramento State Library with the state having a little bit larger collection with information.

Cat has been researching her "people" for many years and has used her Excel spreadsheet to keep track of them all. She has done it in columns: directory, year, page #, last name, first name, middle initial, spouse, occupation, address code, town, etc.

And her best advice to us was, "**Use the City Directories!**"



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR

September 2007

4 **Tuesday – 10:00 am. The Board Meeting** was held at the home of Ed Mason in Alamo.

18 **Tuesday - 10:00 am. The General Meeting** will be held at the Danville Family History Center on Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo. From I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east 2 &1/2 miles. The speaker will be Sarah Harris.

October 2007

2 **Tuesday – 10:00 am. A Board Meeting** will be held at the home of Vern Segelke in Danville.

16 **Tuesday – 10:00 am. The General Meeting** will be held at the Danville Family History Center on Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo.

SRVGS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP (*The Master Genealogist*) -- This is a genealogy software users group for PCs with their focus on the use of *The Master Genealogist*. This group will meet Tuesday, September 18, after the general meeting at about 12:30 pm at the home of Peggy Dearman in Danville. Please bring a bag lunch. Peggy Dearman is the contact person for the group. Phone 837-1621 or e-mail pdearman@earthlink.net .

FAMILY TREE MAKER GROUP – This is a genealogy software users group for PCs with their focus on the use of *Family Tree Maker*. This group

will meet on September 27 at the FHC in Alamo from 10:00 – 12:00. It meets every fourth Thursday morning, except in August and December. Gail Roche Van Wye is the contact person for the group. Phone 253-1096 or e-mail gailrvw@aol.com.

GERMAN – The German Group will have their annual Oktoberfest luncheon on their regular meeting day, (the fourth Wednesday) September 26th at the home of Carol Huvane in Walnut Creek. Helen Odegard is the new contact person for this group. For more information, please contact her at 932-6796 or e-mail shodegard@aol.com.

IRISH – This special interest group will meet September 12th (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 more information.

SOUTHERN – This group will meet September 11th (the second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 am. At the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. In October, the group will meet on the 9th at the home of Suzanne Johnston. 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.

NEWS VIA EMAIL – Ed Mason is the coordinator for the sending of group emails. This extends our group communication ability beyond the monthly newsletter. In addition, about half of our members have chosen to receive their monthly newsletter by email, the advantages being; faster delivery, a much prettier presentation in full color, substantial savings for the Society and for the environment. Ed 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 always have the option to Opt-Out of the email distribution. Notify Ed Mason at: edmason@sbcglobal.net

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

President:	Ed Mason	925-838-7848
	edmason@sbcglobal.net	
1st V.P.	Barbara Dittig	925-648-9364
2nd V.P. Program:		
	Kathy Javdani	925-736-5464
	Clarice Hart	925-743-9245
	Lisa Cooke	925-831-8537
3rd V.P. Membership:		
	Patty & Russ Erickson	925-229-0889
	Sandra Burns	925-648-4653
Recording Secretary:		
	Carol Huvane	925-947-5669
Corresponding Secretary:		
	Vern Segelke	925-838-8570
Treasurer:	Ileen Peterson	510-651-7728
Parliamentarian:	Virginia Rood	925-937-8659

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

18 September Tuesday - 7 pm

The ***Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society*** will hold a regular meeting at the Santa Clara City Public Library, 2635 Homestead Road in Santa Clara. Michael Griffith will be discussing the New Santa Clara County Archives, its holdings and plans for the future.

20 October Saturday - 8 am to 4:30 pm

The ***Concord Family History Center*** will have its annual fall seminar at 3700 Concord Blvd. in Concord. Six one hour class periods will begin at 9:15 am. Over 40 classes will be offered. Prior to September 30, the registration fee is $25 which includes a syllabus. For the seminar only, the fee is $7. Bring a bag lunch. The registration form and fee may be mailed to:

Concord Family History Center
c/o Jackie Hein
2129 North 6th Street,
Concord, CA 94519

3 November Saturday - 9:30 am to 3 pm

The ***San Mateo County Genealogy Society*** will have its annual fall seminar at the First

Presbyterian Church, 25th and Hacienda Avenues in San Mateo. The featured speaker will be Christine Rose. She will give four lectures: Addicted to Courthouses, County and other Local Land Records, Military Records for Problem Solving, Using little known & neglected Land, Federal, Court & Military Records.

The advanced registration fee for non-members is $27 which includes a syllabus.

Visit www.smcgs.org/ to print a form and get more information. Checks may be mailed to:

Patrick Gilbride,
153 Occidental Ave.,
Burlingame, CA 94010-5219.

President's Message

By Ed Mason

I hope that everyone has had an enjoyable summer and some time for pursuit of genealogy. With a chance to put many of my SRVGS' commitments and other activities on the back burner, I was able to spend more time on mine.

My wife and I usually spend two weeks on the east coast. This year it was only one. On recent trips I had explored the trails of my ancestors in Bristol County, MA and Columbia and Green Counties, NY as well as Margaret's more recent forebears in Dutchess County, NY and Fairfield County, CT. This year, despite the brevity of our stay, we had a chance to do some additional research.

On our way from Rhinebeck, NY where we visited Margaret's oldest sister, to Southington, CT, the home of one of her brothers, heavy traffic caused us to depart the freeway. Checking out the map I found that we would be driving through Cheshire, in central Connecticut. I knew that my ancestors had helped to found New Haven, Wallingford and Cheshire, in that order, before departing for more open space and fertile soil in New York State. One of those relatives was Lemuel Hitchcock, a Revolutionary soldier, born in Cheshire, who was the subject of a video that I showed at our General Meeting a few months ago. This was my first visit to Cheshire, a very pleasant and seemingly peaceful New England town. I snapped pictures of the pretty Congregational Church in the center of town. Our next stop was the Cheshire Hillside Cemetery. Easily two thirds of the names there were from my family tree: Hitchcock, Hotchkiss, Munson, Peck, Bradley, Merriman, Cooke, etc. More pictures were taken, but we were able to remain in town for only 30 minutes, as we couldn't afford to be late for our visit with nearby live relatives.

Nine hours after we left Cheshire, tragedy stuck this peaceful town. Many of you have read about how two hardened criminals, who should not have been on the loose, invaded the home of a well-known doctor and his wife, murdering the wife and two daughters and setting the house on fire. The youngest of the perpetrators was raised in the town and was home-schooled in a pre-Revolutionary building, the Merriman-Cooke house. I live 3,000 miles away, but for me this felt very close to home.

Margaret's ancestry is 50% Irish and 50% Slovak. In 2002, I had assembled a tree of all of the descendants of the original Irish Immigrants and run a McDonald family reunion with 155 people attending, many meeting each other for the first time. Now I was working on Spodnik, the Slovakian side. While in southern Connecticut, near Bridgeport, we visited Margaret's mother's only surviving sibling, now 98. Whereas she was not very conversant, her daughter in Greenwich, a first cousin Margaret had not seen for at least 60 years, amply filled the void. More pictures and video were recorded. Our next stop was the Bridgeport library, accompanied by Margaret's 83 year-old brother, who loves these outings. There we took 68 digital photographs of pages in the Bridgeport City Directories, much quicker, better and cheaper than using the copier – as well as being easier on the books. The directories served as a good Census supplement when trying to reconstruct a family between Censuses and after 1930. We have now assembled many of the descendants from the original immigrants. We have identified the town in Slovakia. A lot more work needs to be done. Maybe there is another family reunion in our future.

Genealogists never die, they just lose their census! Anonymous

Who's Who in Our SRVGS Society

Dorothy Baker

I was born and raised in San Francisco - 3rd generation. Became an Elementary School Teacher. Taught 3rd & 4th Grade in Chinatown. When I married, we moved to Danville. Continued teaching until we adopted our two boys. Later when they were in high school, started working for Hallmark. Twenty years later, still working for Hallmark. Ten of those twenty years, owned a Hallmark store in Danville.

Now - genealogy. When Matthew, my oldest, was in Junior High in January of 1982, one of his teachers assigned a Family Tree. With the help of my Mother and my Father's sister and brother, we constructed one. Of course, Matt received an "A". In July of that year, my Mother called from her home in San Francisco saying she just received a letter from a man in New Jersey writing for a Wilhelm Paschen, in Germany. He had made a recently trip to SF and copied all the Eggers' (my maiden name) from the SF telephone book and was now writing to each one asking if they were related to him. He included pictures which were of my Grandmother, Father, his Sister and two Brothers. Thus began my genealogy quest. Wilhelm provided lots of my Dad's family history in Germany. Still searching for my Dad's mother's side.

My mother's side was cracked after many years of research by Google and Ellis Island records. Found my Grandfather's sister's arrival at Ellis Island naming the small town, Ringstead in Germany as her last residence. Using that name I Googled it. Came up with a long list of hits. One being a Newsletter from a church in a small town in England which was the sister city to Ringstead. Wrote them asking if they could give me a name of a person in Ringstead who could write and speak English. They gave me the Vicar's son's name. Long story short - Vicar sent me the church records naming my Great Great Grandparents on both side, Grand grandparents on both side, parents and one more sister of my Maternal Grandfather.

Google also had a death notice of a man who was born in Ringstead and died in Tenn., whose mother had the same first name as my Grandfather's sister. So I wrote to the Church asking them to forward a letter I included to one of the daughter's of this man. BINGO! It turned out that it was my Grandfather's sister. The ladies were her Granddaughters. Still correspond with them.

Found my Maternal Grandmother - with the help of a hired German Genealogist.

Still looking for some of my relatives lost in San Francisco.

lleen Peterson

I succeeded Dorothy Humpal as SRVGS Membership chair in 2005 and was just elected Treasurer. These positions are great because I get to know so many of you better and can expand my repertoire of useful computer skills. I was born in Sacramento during WWII since my father was an Army Air Force navigator who flew over 50 missions and then came back to teach new navigators there. I grew up in a town of 5000 in southwestern Oregon and graduated with a degree in History from Stanford University. I worked for the federal government for nearly 34 years. My husband, Michael Sites, and I met at Stanford and we have one daughter, Melanie. Michael is in satellite communications and Melanie has an import business with her China-born husband.

Genealogy became my passion after I retired in 2000. One of my father's sisters was the family genealogist and after she died, her daughters and I agreed that we needed to keep her work going. In addition, my husband's mother and aunt are very knowledgeable about their family histories and I have spent many pleasant hours documenting their recollections. I have made connections with some great relatives and many wonderful people since studying genealogy in earnest.

I am primarily an internet researcher since I am very allergic to dust and mold. (That is why my aunt couldn't 'hook' me when I stayed with her in New Jersey one summer.) I also am a generalist because my families and my husband's came from all over Europe and came through both New England, the Midwest and the South. Thus, I have English connections through New England, which is what my aunt researched, Icelandic settlers who came to Minnesota in 1879 and can be traced back at least to

the 1490's, my Finnish-Swede grandfather, who came to California in 1903 and Prussian great and great-great grandparents who arrived in the mid 1800s and settled Michigan and Wisconsin.

Michael's people came from the British Isles through Virginia to Arkansas, always moving to the far frontier and away from government record keepers. His other lines came from Lithuania to coal mines in Pennsylvania and then Oklahoma, and he has a French great grandmother who pursued her fiancé to Indian Territory in the 1890's.

I now know a lot more about my mother's German lines than she ever knew because her mother was orphaned at the age of 5 and reared by her maternal aunt.

So far, I haven't found any famous, infamous or royal ancestors, just good solid folks, the most noteworthy of which were the founders of the Taylor Brothers Thermometer Company in New York.

My one regret is that I did not become more interested in genealogy twenty years earlier, when more of the family who actively researched were still alive.

Patty Erickson

I am a second generation Californian from Los Angeles. I was a teacher for 3 1/2 years after college, and have 3 children and 7 grandchildren. I am married 49 years in June, 2007. My love of genealogy is shared with a love of counted cross stitching.

I have a strong British Isles ancestry. I have 2 early English families; Conkling, now Conklin, and Holland. Two Conkling families, both men glassmakers, arrived in Salem, MA in the 1630s. By 1649 these families were in Long Island, New York. From there they went to NJ, PA, Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa. My Holland family is supposedly from Maryland according to the 1850 Ohio census but my connection is not firm. They also went to Iowa, then to Los Angeles, CA about mid 1880 where my GGF was the proprietor of the Metropolitan Stables. He was a blacksmith and seller of grain and feed. My GF worked for him and drove horse taxies.

I also have a Parker family (my father's), Scots-Irish in origin. They came to PA, KY, and to Missouri. I am struggling to connect my Missouri Parkers to the correct Kentucky family, as many have similar names. Two other ancestral families went to Missouri; the Youree family from NC to TN with a third GF going to Missouri; and a Campbell family with a third GGF moving to Missouri. Both families have original land grants in Jackson County Missouri.

My 3 Irish families are each from a different county in Ireland. The Sheridans are from County Cavan, with parish and townland known. The Donahues are from eastern County Galway, parish and townland unknown. The Coughlins are quite likely from County Offaly. All these families intermarried.

The last family to share is John Bowen's from Cornwall, England, who was naturalized in NJ in 1846 or 7 at about 20 years of age. He is found again in the Nevada state census of 1875, living with his family in Wadsworth, Nevada which was a railroad yard for the Central Pacific. He was a RR engineer. They then moved to Virginia City and Gold Hill in 1887, where their home lot was found. He likely worked on the Virginia and Truckee RR. Moving to San Bernardino County, Mary died in childbirth in 1890, followed by John's death in a RR accident 6 months later, leaving 6 children from infant to teenagers as orphans. They grew up in various homes and later raised families in that county and Los Angeles.

EDUCATION

SRVGS Members who want to improve their research skills will have several excellent choices starting in September.

The Acalanes Adult Education classes on genealogy taught by Cat Nielsen (our speaker at the July meeting) start on Wednesday, September 12 at the Del Valle campus 1963 Tice Valley Rd., Walnut Creek and meet weekly to December 12. Fall registration information is on the web site for Acalanes at: http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted/html/familycommunityandtheworld.htm

There is a link to a registration form that you can print out. Fees are $68 ($22 for seniors). Class size is limited to the number of computers in the

room. Call the office to find out if the classes are full (925-280-3980 ext. 8001) before going in to register in person. Classes are:

06-5921 GENEALOGY class (for beginning to intermediate level) meets 9:30 – 11:30am.

06-5922 The GENEALOGY SEMINAR (for problem-solving) meets 12:30 –2:30pm

06-5923 THE MASTER GENEALOGIST class is for beginning and continuing students who want to learn to fully use this top-rated genealogy software program. Meets 3-5pm.

The Rossmoor Computer Club (http://www.rossmoorcomputerclub.com) offers a Seminar "Genealogy: An Introduction" by Cat Nielsen on Thursday, October 4, 1-3pm in the same location as the classes above. Fee is $10.

The 2-part classes for SRVGS members called "GETTING ORGANIZED AND WHERE TO GO FROM THERE" taught by Frances Lloyd, are a good choice for both beginners and those who have been researching for awhile. Learn how to organize your records and keep your files in order from the start. The first classes are scheduled for 2 Tuesdays, September 25 and October 2, at 10am in Frances Lloyd's home in Danville. Classes will be kept small (4-5) and will be scheduled again later if there is a waiting list. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting on September 18. For more information contact Dorothy Stanton (925)820-3757 or dpstant@hotmail.com or Frances Lloyd.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Coordinator: Bob Venter 925-454-9919
Email: rjventer@comcast.net

Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke 925-838-8570
Email: v.m.seg3@sbcglobal.net

Mailing: Lucy Carver 925-837-3146

***Deadline* 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 the Coordinator.

INDIVIDUAL HELP

Do you need individual help in overcoming a "brick wall" in your research? Go to the SRVGS web site, click on RESOURCES, then click on INDIVIDUAL HELP FOR SRVGS MEMBERS.

Want to help someone who is having research problems in your area of knowledge? Call Harry Baggett at 925.837.7960 to have your name added to the SRVGS Individual Help list.

Harry Baggett trvlr1@hotmail.com

NARA FEE INCREASE PROPOSALS

_ Passenger Arrival Lists, NATF Form 81, $25.00

_ Federal Census Requests, NATF Form 82, $25

_ Eastern Cherokee Applications to the Court of Claims, NATF Form 83, $25.00

_ Land Entry Records, NATF Form 84, $40.00

_ Full Pension File More than 75 Years Old (Civil War Period), NATF Form 85, $125.00

_ Full Pension File More Than 75 Years Old (Non-Civil War), NATF Form 85, $60.00

_ Pension Documents Packet (Selected Records), NATF Form 85, $25.00

_ Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, NATF Form 85, $25.00

_ Military Service Files More Than 75 Years Old, NATF Form 86, $25.00

The link to the proposed rule is:
http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-3160.htm

Tips from the Pros: Is That Obituary Misleading?

from Michael John Neill

Many genealogists use obituaries as a part of their research. They can easily be a clue to additional records or sources, but must be used with care. It is important to remember that the information contained in an obituary can be incorrect, misleading, or incomplete. The confusion is compounded when an obituary contains all three errors.

The deceased might have been married three times, but only the last spouse is listed in the obituary. Children of the deceased may be named, but they may not have the same set of both parents and none may be the child of the spouse listed in the obituary. Lists of children may even be incomplete, especially if there has been a family squabble or an estrangement.

Individuals listed as children may actually be step-children of the deceased. The step-parent/step-child bond may have been a very strong one and the step-parent may have been a parent to the child in all the important ways, but the obituary may not make the distinction which the genealogist typically wants to make.

And there can easily be unintentional errors due to inaccurate knowledge on the part of the obituary informant.

An obituary may be an important part of your genealogical research, but the information it contains should be used with care and as a pointer to other records. Many times the obituary's purpose is to notify newspaper readers of the death and funeral of the deceased. Those details are usually correct; other details should be used with caution.

Ancestry Quick Tip
8/31/2007 - Archive

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

FIRST CLASS MAIL