

SAN RAMON VALLEY
GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 305
Diablo, CA 94528-0305
President: Ed Mason
Coord. Editor: Bob Venter
Meetings: 10:00 a.m.
3rd Tuesday of the Month
(Except August & December)
Danville Family History Center
Stone Valley & Smith Rds., Alamo
<http://srvgensoc.org>

San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society

Vol. XXIV No. 6 January - 2009



***** NOTE TIME CHANGE! *****
THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD AT 1:00 PM
(Due to conflict with the Presidential Inauguration)

THIS MONTH – January 20, 2009
"City Directories"
Presented by: Dr. Stephen Harris



Dr. Harris will start with an overview of what city directories are, how they are organized, the major types of information that they contain, and where they can be found (in libraries and on-line). He will then describe some genealogy questions that directories might help answer. For example, "I know my grandfather lived in Cleveland in 1910, but I can't find him in the Census" or "I'd like to get church records for my family but I don't know what church they attended". Of course, there will also be an opportunity for questions from the audience.

Dr. Harris was born in Brooklyn, NY and grew up in the 'burbs' of NYC. He received a Ph.D. in Psychology from UC Berkeley and never considered being anywhere else but here, so he stayed in Berkeley and worked for the Contra Costa Health Department, as Director of Planning and Evaluation, for 33 years (now retired). He started doing genealogy intensively after all family records were destroyed in the Oakland Hills fire, 1991. Dr. Harris eventually found that other peoples' relatives were more interesting than his own, so became a professional genealogist. To assist in this research, he has assembled a library of 6,000 city and telephone directories from the 1860s to the 1960s, including all states and many foreign countries. His office/library is located across the hall from the CGS library in Oakland.



November Meeting
"Family History Documentation - or
Eliminating Junk Genealogy"

Speaker: Janet Brigham Rands & Richard Rands Reporter: Lee Schlenker



Our speakers for November were Janet Brigham Rands, who is vice-president of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group, and Richard Rands, president of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group, as well as Janet's husband. They did a "tag team" presentation. Janet presented her "Mis-Documentation Horror

Stories" first. Richard did his presentation on the best practices for documentation in your computer database next. Both of them were very interesting on their subjects.

Janet stated that "junk" is everywhere and genealogy has a lot which is not factual. Even in her own family history she as found "junk" and



Janet Brigham Rands

then taken off in a wrong direction. She sited her ancestor, Sarah Woodin, who had been married several times, and traced a long convoluted story (by another ancestor) concocted just for the sake of a “good read” for the relatives. This story was written up in Daughters of the Pioneers. The story went that Sarah was the daughter of Lord James Wooding (Woodin or Woodding) of England. She married below her station when she married Daniel Smith. She studied medicine in the East and was the first doctor and surgeon in Utah. Janet couldn’t find where this fact was chronicled in Utah history. What she did find out was that Sarah really couldn’t sign her name properly - she used the “X” as her mark. And Janet found out that she did not go East to study medicine, so was not really a doctor. This original story was a good one - but “junk.” It was fraudulent and part of the family knew it!

Janet sited her second case: Ole Christian Sonne of Denmark, whose last name really wasn’t Sonne. While traveling to America his mother died on board the ship and his father died of TB shortly thereafter after arriving in America. He and his sister are taken in by the Sonne family because their father asked the Sonnes to watch over the children. Sybil enjoyed writing



Richard Rands

and kept many, many note books of her and her brothers life on this farm. These were translated into English by Janet’s mother. These children were actually slaves to the Sonne family. They did a large majority of the work around the farm. The Sonnes had run Ole and Sybil’s stepmother and her newborn off the land to start off with taking over the farm. Ole and his sister had to milk the cows and churn butter for the Sonnes without getting any fair share of the money when the butter was sold. Milk for them came only by squirting fresh milk right from the cow into their mouths. The kids nearly starved. And the land truly belonged to the widow, Ole, Sybil and the newborn.

Janet says to check the consistency of the birth and death records to prove you’re not working with too much “junk.”

Richard says he considers himself the “documentation Evangelist.” When it comes to documentation you should find three original sources. He sited a book regarding the Randall Family of Connecticut in the 1600s written by the president of the NEGS in the early 1900s. After researching, Richard found that dates didn’t coincide and some things didn’t gel only to find out that the president of the NEGS had the wrong

wife, Mary, listed with the right Randall husband. Richard says you should document where you found your information even if it's *not* a reputable source.

Personal knowledge is a valuable thing. And any genealogy program has the same basic concept when using citations. Anything that has value if there is documentation. He sited his parents have loads of photos but there isn't any documentation on any of them. So, he numbered the interesting photos, had his parents write that number on a sheet telling who they were, where it was, and just any details they could remember about that picture. Then you can match their numbered stories to the numbered photo.

Each time you document you need to choose a title that is consistent throughout: 1) either by surname, 2) by geography, 3) by type of record (census, vital records, personal knowledge). Doing a family documentation might work something like this: the surname (from a person's knowledge) = list the name, the relationship, phone number or address.

Besides personal documented knowledge there is unusual documents such as: a source within a source; unidentified source (newspaper, letters, photos, forms, certificates, etc.); family lore, traditions, "stuff," old family movies.

He passed out a multi-page handout on rules for good documentation listed in boxes: Box #1 - document as you go, enter sources & notes in a consistent format, enter a source description only once, use confidential information with discretion and sensitivity. Box #2 - list all sources found for each event, identify and document conflicting or missing information, avoid using abbreviations, specify additional research where needed. Box #3 - imagine someone else getting a copy of your data, strive to obtain primary sources for each event, welcome input and constructive review of your documentation. Box #4 - identify all researchers by name for all contributions, including your own (use your own name, not *I* or *me*), *recognize* that good documentation requires continuous refinement.

Richard and Janet work within the SVC GG showing and sharing their ideas on documentation. They will also help other genealogy societies or persons willing to come to them.



President's Message

By Ed Mason

As we learned in 2008, the economy, unlike genealogy, does not get better every year. Those who had faith that housing prices would continue to go up year after year were proven wrong. But genealogy researchability does get better every year and I'd like to think that our society does as well.

Few would disagree that more databases being digitized and indexed every year is moving our research access in the right direction – a better direction. I'll cite a couple of examples:

- Ancestry just released Florida States Censuses, including 1935 and 1945. My mother had two brothers who were described by relatives as "wild" in their early years. My research had already uncovered one previously unknown first cousin fathered by the elder brother. Now, with the release of those two Florida Censuses, I find that I have another first cousin, fathered by the younger brother. Now, to advance my research, I'll have to rely on more traditional methods, such as sending off for birth and marriage certificates.
- I recently produced a one-hour video on the life of my grandfather, Edward Luther Mason, who died at the age of 46, 13 years before I was born. He had been a principal of the high schools in three different locations and superintendent of a fourth, so I knew that there would be newspaper articles mentioning him. Colorado Springs had digitized and indexed their newspaper microfilm and it took me 15 minutes to do my research there. Clinton, Iowa had not done so. I had to borrow the microfilms from the state archives and spend 24 painful hours scouring them in the Pleasant Hill Library in order to uncover a similar amount of material.

We have a lot of people to thank for making our genealogical research easier and better and I have a lot of people to thank for the progress that

we have made within our own society. I have been doing some thanking, one or two people at a time at our monthly meetings. But what actual progress did we make in 2008?

- For the first time, we made Internet access available to our speakers during their presentations.
- We had a partial revival of library trips.
- We improved our Community Outreach and Publicity and participated in the Alameda county Fair.
- We survived the Recording Secretary crisis.
- We created our first Mission Statement.
- We continued to improve our website, adding forms, pictures, member publications, downloadable copies of past Newsletters (now totaling 22) and a cross-reference to members' surnames and locations being researched.
- The Program Committee did an excellent job coming up with good speakers.
- We provided many educational opportunities and publicized others.
- We performed very effectively in Accounting and Membership.
- The Special Interest Groups continued their good work.

In 2009 we would like to:

- Get some new people involved as officers or doing committee work.
- Attract more members.
- Be a Society that appeals to all of our members. (Please speak up and provide us with your thought on how to make us better. We are always ready to listen).
- Provide instructions to help some of our members get going on the FamilySearch indexing project.

Here's wishing all of our members a very good 2009, genealogically and otherwise.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SRVGS CALENDAR

January 2009

6 Tuesday – 10:00 am. A Board Meeting was held at the home of Lisa Cooke in San Ramon.

20 Tuesday – 1:00 pm.

Note the special time!

The 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.

February 2009

3 Tuesday – 10:00 am. A Board Meeting will be held at the home of Sherri Hedman in San Ramon.

17 Tuesday - 10:00 am. The General Meeting will be held at the LDS Church 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 PC's with their focus on the use of The Master Genealogist. This group will NOT meet in January. They **will** meet Tuesday, February 17 after the general meeting at about 1:00 pm at the home of Phil Seelinger in Orinda. Peggy Dearman is the contact person for the group. Phone 837-1621 or e-mail: dearmanp@gmail.com



FAMILY TREE MAKER GROUP

This is a genealogy software users group

for PC's with their focus on the use of Family Tree Maker. This group will meet January 22nd (the fourth Thursday of the month) from 10:00 am until noon at the Danville Family History Center in Alamo. 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 meet January 28th (the fourth Wednesday) at 10:00 am. at the home of Bob Venter in Livermore. Helen Odegard is the contact person for this group. For more information, please contact her at 932-6796 or e-mail shodegard@att.net.



IRISH – This special interest group will meet January 14th (the second Wednesday) at 10:00 am. at the home of Patty Erickson in Pleasant Hill. Patty Erickson is the contact person for the group. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net.



SOUTHERN – The Southern Interest Group will meet at 10 am on January 8th and February 12th (the SECOND THURSDAY of the month) at the Family History Center on Stone Valley Road. The contact person is Dorothy Stanton; Phone (925) 820-3757 or e-mail dpstant@hotmail.com. New persons interested in attending should contact Dorothy Stanton for information.

LIBRARY TRIP

29 January, Thursday, 11:00 am Sutro State Library, 480 Winston Drive in San Francisco. Gail Roche Van Wye has planned this research trip to Sutro. Our members are to get together at 11:00 am, although the library opens earlier. Gail is our Library Trip coordinator. Additional information will be given at our general meeting, or phone 253-1096. Whether you are a newcomer or more experienced researcher, this is an excellent opportunity to begin 2009.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

- 13 January - Tuesday 7:30 pm** The Livermore-Amador Genealogy Society will have one of its regular meetings at Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court in Pleasanton. "The Early Pioneers in the Livermore Valley, We're One Big Family" is the title of the presentation that will be made by Isabel Nolte.
- 17 January - Saturday 10:30 am** The San Mateo County Genealogical Society will hold a regular meeting at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, 1700 South El Camino in San Mateo. Databases and Indexes will be the subject of the presentation by John Glead.
- 17 & 20 January 10:30 am to noon** The CGS Library and the Oakland Regional Family History Center. Another Joint Venture with the Oakland Regional Family History Center and the California Genealogical Society. An Intermediate Course will consist of eight sessions and each one will be offered twice; On Saturday at the CGS Library and on the following Tuesday at the Family History Center. All classes are from 10:30 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. The same instructors and handouts will be at both sessions and students can attend classes at either (or both) facilities.

Classes begin on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at the CGS Library.

The full schedule includes the following topics:

- January 17 & 20: Military Records by Susan Goss
- January 24 & 27: Probate and Guardianship Records
- January 31 & February 3: Land and Property Maps, and Gazetteer
- February 7 & 10: Church and Cemetery Records
- February 14 & 17: No classes

- February 21 & 24: Newspaper Research
- February 28 & March 3: Reading and Transcribing the Handwriting of Colonial America
- March 7 & 10 - No classes
- March 14 & 17: Immigration, Passenger Lists, Naturalizations and Passports
- March 21 & 24: Other People Finders, Continuing Education and Giving Back

Pre-registration is necessary to insure adequate handouts. The course fee is \$15 to cover the cost of materials. Individual sessions cost \$2 each. Register by telephone (510) 531-3905 or E-mail: fhcoakland@yahoo.com. Please prepay the materials fee by check, payable to ORFHC. Send to the Oakland Regional Family History Center, 4766 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland CA 94602, and attention: Marge Bell. Indicate "Intermediate Class" in the memo field.

- 20 January - Tuesday 7 pm** The Santa Clara County Historical and Genealogical Society City will hold a regular meeting at the Santa Clara City Library at 2635 Homestead Road in Santa Clara. Footnote.com will be the subject of the presentation by Richard Ferman, a past president of this Society.

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

EDUCATION

 **SRVGS MEMBER CLASS:** Was "I need to get organized" one of your New Year's resolutions? SRVGS is offering a class to help you get started on your genealogical records. Frances Lloyd will teach a 2-part class on GETTING ORGANIZED for both beginning researchers and those who have been at it awhile. When your records are in order, Frances will help you decide what research steps to take next. The class will meet at her home, 210 Town and Country Dr., Danville, on January 26 and February 2 (Mondays) at 10am. Sign-up at the regular membership meeting on January 20 or you can contact Dorothy Stanton in advance.

 **ACALANES ADULT EDUCATION** at the Del Valle Campus near Rossmoor again offers Beginning Genealogy, Genealogy Seminar (problem solving for more experienced researchers) and The Master Genealogist (genealogy software) on Wednesdays starting January 7. Ph: 925-280-3945

 **LEARN ONLINE:** For beginning genealogists, or to brush up on research skills, there are a number of online tutorials.

Try yahoogroups' "Researching Your Family Tree" at:

<http://www.learnwebskills.com/family/intro.html>

"Dear Myrtle" has 35 short genealogy lessons with links for further study at:

<http://www.dearmyrtle.com/lessons.htm>

You can read or download research help by states or countries at: <http://www.familysearch.org>.

Rootsweb.com has 31 guides to genealogical research plus various ethnic groups and geographic locations. See:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~rwguide/>

**IN MEMORIAM****MARY JO HOSTENY**

SRVGS has received word of the death of longtime member Mary Jo Hosteny on December 5, 2008 at Lemont, Illinois. Born in Chicago but a resident of California for nearly 60 years, she raised champion show dogs at her Lafayette home and was an AKC licensed judge. She had moved back to Illinois this summer to be near nieces and nephews still living there.

Mary Jo was an active member of SRVGS until recently, serving at various times as Membership Chair, Library Trip coordinator and FamilyTree Maker computer volunteer at the Danville Library as well as at the Family History Center in Alamo. She participated in our Irish Interest Group while researching her Irish roots. Also, she worked with her niece Joanna on her Czech family line (published in the Chicago Genealogical Society Quarterly) and helped others with Czech research.

A memorial mass was held in Chicago at Christ the King Catholic Church. Interment will be at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Lafayette.

ARDITH STEGER

Ardith Osborn Steger died December 21, 2008. She was a member of SRVGS for many years until recently. She spent most of her life in the Danville area. Her family (Osborn) was here 3 generations ago and many, including her sister and one daughter and grandchildren, still live here.

Ardith was a teacher, and taught Home Economics at San Ramon Valley High. Besides belonging to SRVGS, she volunteered at the Family History Center for a number of years. She was very involved in writing her personal history and was generous in providing copies of the family history and genealogy to cousins and those interested in her family. A memorial service will be held on Jan 31st at 11:30 a.m. in the LDS Chapel in Alamo.

SRVGS members wish to express condolences to the Hosteny and Steger families.

**HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS**

President: Ed Mason 925-838-7848
e-mail: edmason@sbcglobal.net

1st V.P. (vacant)

2nd V.P. Program:
Clarice Hart 925-743-9245
Lisa Cooke 925-831-8537
Sherri Hedman 925-275-8123

3rd V.P. Membership:
Jane Nowicki 925-939-7808
Barbara Dittig 925-648-9364

Recording Secretary:
Ileen Peterson 510-651-7728

Corresponding Secretary:
Vern Segelke 925-838-8570

Treasurer: Gail Roche Van Wye 925-253-1096

Parliamentarian:
Virginia Rood 925-937-8659

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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

Calendar Coordinator:
Vern Segelke 925-838-8570
e-mail: 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.

Members 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 at: <http://srvgensoc.org/>, 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 trvrl1@hotmail.com

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Heredity

I am the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.

The years - heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance--that is I;
The eternal thing in man,
That heeds no call to die.

- from *Moments of Vision*
by Thomas Hardy, 1917

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FIRST CLASS MAIL