

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 305
Diablo, CA 94528-8308
President:
Barbara Johnson
Coord. Editor: Sharon Clay
Meetings: 10:00 a.m.
3rd Tues. Of the Month
(Except August & December)
Alamo LDS Church
Stone Valley & Smith Roads - Alamo

Vol. XIV No. 8

March 2000 page 140

THIS MONTH - MARCH 21, 2000

Susan Swindell a member of SRVGS and a recognized speaker and teacher of genealogy will speak about PERSI, about what PERSI is, how to use it and access its articles. She will also demonstrate how to use the CD version and do some look-ups for those in attendance. She will show how this resource can open up a whole new area of research. PERSI gives you access to a large number of periodicals that you would otherwise not know about. It covers from 1847 to the present.

LAST MONTH- FEBRUARY 15, 2000

by Frank Williams

A NOVICE SPEAKS: FINDING 400 YEARS OF FAMILY HISTORY

Speaker: Don Allen

SRVGS member Don Allen told an interesting story of how he began a search for his ancestors with virtually no knowledge of genealogy, by following some of the research principles from his profession of petroleum geology. He feels there are similarities, since in both fields you learn to use a few known facts to develop a research plan leading to findings which are proven by the conclusive results (records) you secure.

Actually, he started on a fertile path well-known to most of us; finding what research had already been done within his family. He discovered his brother had gathered quite a bit of information on recent generations and, importantly, is a trained historian so the research was in good order.

Don next looked up other family members, who yielded mementos and pictures and records that put him a little farther along. He found a directory of family associations showing eleven Allen groups. Writing to each, he found one where there were ties to his family. In this group he found distant cousins

who were able to add several generations to his records.

Although he boasts he has not visited any court-houses; he did admit to obtaining wills, probates, and other records by mail or telephone. He also has used the Internet to check census records. On the Internet he discovered USGenWeb.org where he found that each U.S. county has its own website for genealogical information. At one of these sites he met a historian who had done Allen research for many years, and had traced Don's family back to their arrival in Virginia from England.

Don also found the DAR to be a good source for his research. Although some of our members might caution accepting earlier DAR records at face value without additional checking, by persistence he was able to obtain copies of supporting material from their files.

It is clear Don has come a long way in a brief time, learning as he proceeded. By utilizing family information already gathered by others and
(continued on page 2)

being willing to use the telephone and correspondence extensively, he has traced his Allen family back to their American arrival in 1666 and into English records before that.

It appears his task now is to prove out the records he has gathered; and he commented that he is securing copies of wills and probates to make sure his pedigree is fully proven.

Don's enthusiasm and instinctive use of earlier sources has taken him a long way. It is clear he has learned a lot about a new hobby in a short period of time. Moreover, he has been able to speed his efforts through intelligent use of mail, telephone, and the Internet.

President's Message - March, 2000

Dear members, It is time again to begin the process of electing officers for next year.

Our Nominating committee has been selected and includes 1st Vice President Barbara Dyer, Parliamentarian, Dorothy Stanton, and from the general membership, Fran Schweitzer, with the assistance of Diana Hancock. By the time you receive this you may have already been called. I hope that you are able to help.

Many of our members are retired and like to travel and this sometimes makes it difficult to fill our slate. But past officers and former committee chairmen are usually willing to help out during an absence. So don't feel that you would be terribly tied down if you accept an office or chairmanship.

I've been wondering if all our members understand about the Special Interest Groups. These Groups exist to help our members with research in a particular area, or to help acquire needed skills. We have regular monthly meetings for the Southern, Irish, German, and Portuguese Groups. The computer interest groups cover the MacIntosh Group and a group for those who use the Ultimate Family Tree software, or related "Roots" program. The Publishing Group includes several knowledgeable members who are available to help members who want to publish; whether it may be a family genealogy, letters or diaries of ancestors, etc. These groups meet less frequently. Call Carol Huvane, SIG Coordinator, at 947-5669 for further information. All of these groups are open to any member and you may start at any time. Meeting dates and times, phone numbers and

Treasurer's Report

by Nancy Alexander

SRVGS Fund Balances:

General Fund	\$ 2,448.77
Hospitality	30.78
Publications	941.79
Special Projects	200.00
N.A.R.A. Fund	2.00
Tape Library	101.14
Library:	
Prior year Gifts & Donations	289.54
Current Year Donations	<u>260.00</u>
Overall Total Balance:	\$4,274.02

addresses, are listed in the newsletter: call for directions or just drop in. The Internet Group exchanges information through E-mail. To join, send your e-mail address as directed in the newsletter.

From time to time we poll our members concerning their preferences and plan meetings and a SIG if there seems to be adequate interest in a topic. Sometimes a one-time meeting is held. We have done this for example, for Scandinavian research and for those interested in learning about genealogy on the Internet. I will pass a sign up sheet at our March meeting, so think about what topics you would like to see covered.

Barbara Johnson

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Barbara Dittig 648-9364
Lucy Carver 837-3146

Deadline to put information in newsletter is the last Thursday of the month.

SRVGS CALENDAR MARCH 2000

- 7 **Tuesday - 10:00 a.m.** Board Meeting at Carol Thompson's home, 308 Hartford Road, Danville. Phone 820-4103.
- 21 **Tuesday - 10:00 a.m.** General Meeting at LDS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, Alamo. From I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east. The scheduled speaker is Sue Swindell.
- 23 **Thursday - 10:00 a.m.** Member Education Class - Subject: Newspapers, City Directories and Voter registration. Class will be presented by Carol Glover at her home, 333 Goshen Court, San Ramon. Phone 829-7207 or Cglover613@aol.com
- 28 **Tuesday - 9:00 a.m.** Library Trip to SUTRO Library, 480 Winston Drive, San Francisco (behind Stonestown). Carpools will meet behind Albertson's on Diablo Road in Danville.

APRIL

- 4 **Tuesday - 10:00 a.m.** Board Meeting
- 18 **Tuesday - 10:00 a.m.** General Meeting
- 25 **Tuesday - 9:00 a.m.** Library Trip to Sacramento, CA State Library and Archives

SRVGS Special Interest Groups:

GERMAN - Meets 10 a.m. March 22 (fourth Wednesday) at the home of Fan & Bob Schweitzer, 2493 Lariat Lane in Walnut Creek. Phone 935-5744 or rbtschw@pacbell.net

IRISH & CALIF. - Meets March 8 & April 12 (second Wednesday of month) at 10:00 a.m. at home of Patty Erickson, 10 Ridge Place in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889

PORTUGESE - Meets third Tuesday of month after the general meeting. Bring a bag lunch. March 21 meeting will be at the home of Millie Freitas, 607 Diablo Road in Danville. phone 837-2483

SOUTHERN - Meets March 14 & April 11 (second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 a.m. Dorothy Stanton will host the March meeting at her home, 501 El Capitan Drive in Danville. Phone 838-8682 or dpstant@hotmail.com

PUBLISHING - A future meeting will be scheduled as interested persons express a need.

MAC COMPUTER USERS - Formerly met third Wednesday of month. Future meetings to be announced.

Formerly ROOTS software users - For those learning to use Ultimate Family Tree. Has met after the general meeting on third Tuesday of month. Future meetings will be announced at the general meeting.

INTERNET - Interested users communicate via e-mail. Members should contact Robert daRoza, vrdaroza@ix.netcom.com to be included.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS:

March 14 Tuesday 7:30 p.m. Livermore Amador Genealogical Society (LAGS), meets at Beth Emek, corner of College and South M St., Livermore.

March 9 Thursday 7:30 p.m., Contra Costa County Genealogical Society, meets in the Community Room of the new Concord Police station, 1350 Gallindo Ave.

March 16 Thursday 1 to 3 p.m., Mt. Diablo Genealogical Society, meets at the Civic Bank of Commerce, 1940 Tice Valley Road, Walnut Creek. E-mail Don Joost at bjdon@silcon.com. They will be hosting a series of 6 classes by Bette Kot.

March 23 Thursday 7:30 p.m. LAGS Computer interest group meets at Sonoma School, 543 Sonoma St., Livermore.

March 18 Saturday 9 a.m. to 4p.m. in San Mateo. SMCoGS (smcgs@genealogy.org) sponsoring Marielle Bourgeois. Focus on first French colonies in America, Acadians, New (Continued page 4)

Calendar of Other Events - Continued

France and Louisiana. \$23 at the door of the Presby. Church, W. 25th & Hacienda.

March 25 Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., in Sonora. The Civil War presented by Grace M. Hackwell. Sponsored by Tuolumne Co. GS. \$22 Must pre-register. E-mail Kate Prunte, e-mail address is thegenie @inreach.com or phone (209) 536-0574

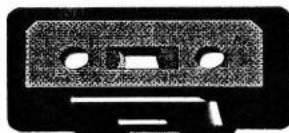
April 1 Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A day with John Colletta sponsored by Sacramento German Genealogical Society. Meets at La Sierra Community Center in Carmichael, \$30 at the door. Topics include Passenger arrivals & Naturalization. phone: Maxine Anderson (916) 489-7872, e-mail: sacgergensoc@hotmail.com

April 15 Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sonoma Co. Genealogical Society sponsors a Seminar by Curt B. Witcher of Allen county, Indiana Library. Meets in Santa Rosa, Hwy 101 at River Rd. \$20 at the door. phone: Nancy Flack (707) 538-8216, or LoisNim@aol.com

April 28-29 Friday noon to 8 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Pleasanton, annual CGS Fair. There will be over 30 classes, many exhibitors and featuring Sandra Hargreaves Luecking. For admission rates and other info, call CGS Thurs. -Sat. 9 to 4 at (510) 663-1358 or e-mail library@calgensoc.com

National Archives Workshops: **March 10th** \$15 each, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in San Bruno. To register, contact Rose Mary Kennedy (650) 876-9009. Passenger Arrival and Naturalization
May 12 Military Part I-Pre-revolution to War of 1812
June 16 Military Part II-Civil War to WWII

NOTE: Newsletter coordinator Sharon Clay's e-mail address is incorrect in the roster. Correct address is: sharoncl@ix.netcom.com



NOTES ON THE TAPE LIBRARY

If you are thinking about publishing your genealogy, you probably should visit the Publishing Interest Group, but also check out the tape: "**Indexing for Genealogists: Is there more than one right way?**" By Patricia Law Hatcher. A good index is the key to a successful book on family history. However, how will you index - by surname only, what about locations? Will you do ALL locations (like farms, and creeks) or only towns, cities, counties, states and countries? What about name changes, how will you index the same name with several spellings - or names that changed with immigration? Where do you put McBride? With or after MacBride? What do you do with letters that are not in the English alphabet? How do you "alphabetize" the Scandinavian, German, French, or other letters that we don't have? It is an interesting and thought promoting tape. **Check it out!!!**

Bill Allen, C. Graves, Dorothy Stanton and Jane Steiner, SRVGS members: "**Share An Ancestor - Solve a Problem**", share their research findings.

Other tapes on publishing include:
"**Genealogy Writing**" (2 tapes) How to immortalize your research without too many headaches. By Elizabeth Shown Mills.

And we can't discuss publishing without mentioning our Publishing Group's book & tape, "**Print, Publish, Preserve**"

The California Genealogical Society is looking for volunteers to help at the CGS Fair, April 28-29. If you volunteer for four hours, you get free admission for one day. Contact Barbara Johnson 837-2153 or Jane Steiner 283-0867 for the form to fill out.

Officers of the SRVGS

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Vice Pres. Barbara Dyer 820-9738
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Recording Sec. Susan Hanck 933-9505
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Corres. Sec. Carol Thompson 820-4103
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Membership: Diana Hancock 820-1424
512 Zephyr Circle, Danville 94526-4923
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Treasurer: Nancy Alexander 820-1593
e-mail: lxnancy@aol.com

Annual Dues: Individual \$15.00

Family \$20.00

Membership year: June 1 - May 30th

New Members:

Elaine Franke	Sue Stockman
24 Pescadero Ct.	5221 Esmond Ave
Danville, CA 94526	Richmond, CA
831-1989	94805-1427
	(510)234-5569
	e-mail: Spike1@dellnet.com
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Mary Louise McEnroe
3009 Golden Rain #12
Walnut Creek CA 94595
933-9742
MMcEnroe@silcon.com

Address Change: Helene Johnson
3975 J. Street, Apt. 112
Sacramento, CA 95816
no phone or e-mail listed.

Italian Researchers

Pointers, a research group devoted to Italian research holds luncheon meetings several times a year at different locations throughout the Bay Area. They will hold their next meeting on April 1, at Frankie, Johnnie & Luigi Too, 11891 Dublin Blvd. Dublin. Social hour starts at 11:00 a.m., with lunch at noon. Reservations and check must be made by March 27th. Please contact Millie Freitas, 837-2483 for menu selections and prices, and information about the group.

It's on the Internet

American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1940.

You can search by name, state, and more. Maybe you'll find something about someone in your family, or maybe something about the culture of your family when they came to America. Try:
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammen/wpaintro/wpa_home.html.

An interesting search site is the Treasure Maps site - *the How-to Genealogy Site*. From here you can go to sites on "Deciphering Old Hand-writing", check out the catalog of Ancestor Publishers, take an on-line Tour of the Family History Center in Salt Lake and more.

The Genealogy Bulletin - a Heritage Quest Publication has lots of good information and links and is available free on-line at <http://www.genealogybulletin.com>.

It was recently announced that the Hamburg, Germany emigration List, which includes over 4 million emigrants between the years of 1850-1934 will gradually be released on a web site starting this month. The site will be inaugurated on March 20, 2000. It will start with the years 1890-1893, and is planned to be gradually expanded over a 4 year period. The Hamburg List is a valuable resource which usually includes the name of the town/village the immigrant came from as well as the date and ship on which he/she embarked. The web site is:
www.hamburg.de/LinkToYourRoots/english/welcome.htm

Have you checked out your **Lutheran Roots**? There is a very extensive searchable Lutheran Web page that links to many Lutheran resources and even non-Lutheran churches. It also includes Germany resources. You can subscribe to a Lutheran-Roots mailing list as well.
http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~mdtaffet/lutheran-roots_list.html

The Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has a website listing its holdings and research services at: <http://www.elca.org/os/archives/intro.html>

SURNAMES: THEIR MEANING AND ORIGINS

Have you ever wondered where those surnames in your family tree came from? How the Almquist got into a bunch of Johnsons, Nelsons, and Johanssons? Or where a Goodyear came from in a line of German ancestors?

In the January/Feb. 1996 issue of *Heritage Quest*, Diane Snyder Prak wrote a very well documented article about this subject. She begins with how people decided to take surnames, sort of as nicknames - "Johann the Little", or when a child's last name referenced the father's first name, "Eric Johnson". In 1300 in England, there were only about 20 common names for males and females and nearly 1/3 of the men were known by the names William or John. So, they added descriptive words or patronymics as a necessity - like Brownjohn or Properjohn.

The author then goes on to relate how surnames came about in other countries. In the U.S., they came from these chief sources possibly with foreign origin:

(1) **Place names** - such as physical or political geography such as mountains, river, cities, towns, districts, ecclesiastic and civil parishes, etc. For example:

Stephen at water (English)

John Green (by the village green) English

Farnham (fern ground) became Farnum

Churchhill or Greenhill

A variation of the category are **names derived from things** (heavenly bodies, animals, fish, insects, plants, fruits, flowers, etc. Examples: Moon, Star, Allgeier (vulture) Polk (derived from Pollock), Ptak (bird).

Virtuous idea based names include: Justice, Prudence, Liberty, Hope, Grace, Luck and Reich (meaning powerful, rich or kingdom)

2. **Patronymics** - which attaches "son" or "daughter" or something equivalent to the name of the father.

Tennyson (a derivative of Dennison)

Gibson (son of Gibbs, which is a variation of Gilbert)

Edmundson, which may be shortened to Munson

Mac as in MacGuinnis refers to the son of Guinnis (Scottish)

Matronymics are found among people of Jewish and Welsh descent - Sarason might be one example. "In Wales, a married woman might give her eldest son her maiden name, whereas her other children would use their father's last name."

3. **Occupation names and skills** or even government or ecclesiastic dignitaries would also be included in this list.

Zimmerman (carpenter) - German

Fischer (Fisherman)

Kock (Cook)

Kirschner (fur dealer)

Kaiser or King, Prince, Earl, Pope or Bishop.

4. **Surnames & personal characteristics** like physical personal, moral and mental qualities are included: Bad, Goodman, Longfellow, Short, Strong, Sweet, Lightfoot, Hardy, Moody, Doolittle, Silly and Brainhead (which became Brainerd)

Then there are the **variations of the original** surname because names were spelled as they sounded. However, clerks often interpreted name spellings of new ethnic backgrounds differently, Handwriting varied widely, some was legible and some was not.

Sometimes **vowels and consonants were altered** or interchanged: Nelson, Neilson, Nielson, Nielsen Nilson, and Nilsson. Many German surnames begin with the letters c or k, t or th, sh or sch. P and t are common German transpositions as are pf, f, and z. Pfister might be changed to Fister. Vollbrecht may be altered to become Fulbright.

Inclusions or omissions of prefixes or suffixes:

De or de la or des (which means of the) might be eliminated. De Cruket becomes Crocket; Vanderveer means of the ferry, Vandervelde means of the field (Dutch). These might become Vander.

- ski and -sky (Polish and Russian) means *from the town of*.

Other variations include: (a). Omission of letters or altering pronunciation and spelling to anglicize; (b) rearranging letters; (c) mispronunciations, (d) simplifying unpronounceable names (like Prszybyslawski which become Price). (e) erroneous transcriptions. (f) preserving pronunciation by spelling it as it sounds, or (g) using the translation of the name.

The whole article is quite long but very well documented with references to surnames of varying nationalities. If you have reached a brick wall and have lost a relative because of a surname, look for this reference.

If you would like to know if a nationality is referenced, ask Sharon Clay (462-4518) - Newsletter editor.

FIRE AT NATIONAL ARCHIVES SUITLAND FACILITY

College Park, MD . . . At 2:30 P.M. on Tuesday, February 29, a fire of undetermined origin began in a stack area at the Washington National Records Center, a storage facility operated at the National Archives and Records administration, in Suitland, MD. The fire was completely contained in the stack area. Portions of three rows of records were affected. The smoke detectors and sprinkler system worked as designed. National Archives staff is in the process of evaluating the damage, working with the fire department to determine the cause of the fire.

Ancestry Daily News Mar 6, 2000

MORE ON THE FIRE AT NARA'S SUITLAND BRANCH

Tuesday, February 29, The following is an update on that from Archivist of the United States John Carlin. Although much work will be needed before we can be certain, we believe that of the total of more than 3.7 million cubic feet of records at Suitland, approximately 3,000 cubic feet were in the immediate area. Of those, fewer than 300 cubic feet may have been destroyed. Most of the affected records were wet or damp from sprinkler water or in singed boxes. Our staff at Suitland stayed up through last night making valiant efforts to protect records from water damage and otherwise dealing with the fire's effects, working with personnel from the General Services Administration, from which we lease the facility.

The cause of the fire is as yet undetermined. Because the property is Federal, the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms as well as GSA fire investigators were notified. As the investigation continues, the following is what we know about the fire so far:

The sprinkler alarms were activated at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, and alerted the GSA Control Center that there was a problem. The first fire company arrived sometime between 2:45 and 2:50. A fireman on the scene was overcome with smoke at which point firemen abandoned Stack 15 to open the roof hatches to vent the smoke. This process apparently took approximately one hour to accomplish before the firemen returned to Stack 15 to begin to extinguish the fire. The sprinkler system contained the fire during the period between 2:30 and 3:50 at which point the firemen were able to enter the stack. At 8:13 p.m. the firemen on the scene felt that the fire was sufficiently extinguished to allow the investigation to begin in the stack

Our tracking system enabled us to identify the records on the shelves affected by the fire, and agencies whose records may have been affected have been notified. But we won't be able to identify exactly which records have been affected and how seriously until the investigation of the area is completed and we can examine the materials more closely. I will provide further information as it becomes available. JOHN W. CARLIN
Archivist

In addition, the Associated Press reported that the damaged files were the "inactive files of deceased veterans who previously made claims for benefits." This quote came from Robert Knode, records officer for the Veterans Benefits Administration. Other records were "from District of Columbia government offices, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Labor Department's hour and wage division and the U.S. Patent and Trademark office." Preservation efforts are currently underway.

The entire article is available online at:

http://www.foxnews.com/national/0302/d_ap_0302_192.sml and
http://abcnews.go.com/wire/Politics/ap20000302_1808.html

Swedish Researchers

The Swedish American Genealogy Magazine is sponsoring it's 10th annual trip to Salt Lake City, October 22-October 29, 2000. There will be two top Swedish genealogists from Sweden to help with translations and give hints on research, plus two very efficient Scandinavian-American genealogists. From Sweden will be Elisabeth Thorsell, who edits a publication for the Swedish Federation of Genealogical Societies, and Ulla Sköld, from Västerås, Sweden. From U.S. is Priscilla Sorknes, from Minneapolis, who specializes in Norwegian and Swedish genealogy, and Jill Seaholm from Swenson Center in Rock Island, Illinois.

Cost for the trip, includes 7 nights at the Best Western Salt Lake Plaza Hotel, plus Welcome and Farewell receptions, and a Welcome dinner. There are also daily lectures at the Family History Center and some evening activities. Two people sharing a room and both doing SAG Workshop research is \$1120.00. Two people sharing a room, one doing SAG workshop research and one not doing SAG Workshop research is \$1,000.00. One person doing SAG Workshop and staying alone in a room is \$900. Contact Karna Olsson, (207) 866-2202, or e-mail at ocb@mint.net. \$100.00 deposit holds your space. You arrange airfare.

International Currency Express

The Immigrant Genealogical Society of Burbank recommends International Currency Express for providing foreign currency for travel. Their fee is \$5.00, instead of the \$15 charged by Ruesch International. They also provide money for genealogists who want to send money broad. The money comes to you via mail or UPS. You can check exchange rates at <http://www.Foreignmoney.com/rates.htm>. The toll free phone number is 888-278-6628. They will send you a check in the amount of the foreign currency for a \$5.00 charge. If you want foreign currency for travel, the charge is \$12 for shipping and insurance for any amount, in any number of currencies. For comparison, if you send a check in U.S. funds to someone in Sweden, it costs them \$10-\$14 to cash the check and convert it to Swedish kroner. Through this company you can have the check written in Kroner for only \$5.00, then send it to Sweden.

Census Humor:

A famous Viking explorer returned home from a voyage and found his name missing from the town register. His wife complained to the local civic official who apologized profusely saying... "I must have taken Lef off my census."

(From Gordon A. Berdahl, Alberta, Canada.)

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