

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 305

Diablo, CA 94528-8308

President: Barbara Dyer

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. XVI No. 6

January 2001

THIS MONTH -January 16, 2001

GERMAN GENEALOGY RESEARCH - BURIED IN BAVARIA

John V. Heyse has been studying German genealogy for 25 years, using the Family History Center records plus on-site visits to German Churches, archives, standesamts, and cousins. He will speak on German genealogical research with special emphasis on the features and problems more or less unique to Bavaria. He will discuss an actual case, which began as a search for cousins in this country and continues with research on site in eastern Bavaria. He will be showing view graphs, books, maps and reports. He has a Ph.D. from SUNY at Stony Brook in biochemistry, and is a retired mineralogist from Chevron. He lives in Crocket and is currently serving as "mentor" for Pfalz and Bavaria for the Sacramento German Genealogy Society.

LAST MEETING- November 2, 2000

PREPARING FOR A RESEARCH TRIP -

Notes by Lee Schlenker

David Abrahams, past President of LAGS, member of the S.F. Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society, JCS of Great Britain plus Co-Regional Director for the CSGS Alliance, has for the past 13 years been studying his family history, which has included multiple trips around the country. He gave us some of his tips on his travels which were some very good ideas and very logical ones. The main thrust was the organizing and fine tuning of the materials which you have already collected from your own research. His suggestions:

(1) Take your 8-1/2"x 11" sheets of information, reduce them down by 60-65% fitting two regular sized pages onto one regular sized page, side by side horizontally (leaving the back blank for new research notes), cut page in half, punch holes in them and place in a 6"x 9" binder. This binder is smaller to handle and fits well most anywhere. If a page becomes dislodged from your binder during research, you won't have to search far for your new research notes to match up with your old notes - they'll be on the reverse. Your originals will be left safely at home.

(2) Remember your research surnames. Look for odd spellings of surnames. Make a list of who you want to research in the area you will be visiting.

(3) Make your own migration map, trace the route backwards, learn the particulars about the city/county/state and what caused ancestors to move - was there a war, were your ancestors a minority/majority there, etc. Try to

purchase or copy old maps more true to that time. A good resource - "Map Guide to American Migration Routes" by Dollarhide.

(4) Exhaust all your local research facilities first - Family History Libraries, local libraries, Sutro, National Archives in San Bruno, the DOE library at Cal. Berkeley, Library of Congress and even Stanford. You can write many research facilities asking for information (don't forget the self-addressed stamped envelope.

(5) Find where original documents are kept for the place you will be visiting - before your visit. Check the days, times and holidays of the facility you want to do research in and make sure they are compatible with your own time line. You would hate to travel far, only to find that particular library is closed on the ONLY day you're going to be there. Remember to include a self addressed, stamped envelope for your reply. City halls/local courthouses can have county maps (which have roads, trails, cemeteries) and can save research time. You should have addresses and phone numbers on hand.

(6) Take along a tape recorder with two sets of fresh batteries and multiple 60 minute tapes (60 min. is a stronger tape) for recording interviews. After you get home, remove the tab so you can't record over it, make a copy so it can be played over and over again. When you are interviewing a person, try to have important questions

ready ahead of time, i.e. persons, places, things and certain or special events.

(7) Take a good 35mm camera, film (high speed film is not usually required; Kodak T-Max 100 speed, black & white, found in a camera shop) and a copy board if possible.

(8) Lap top computer, plus blank disks. Note: Laptops are so popular now they are likely to be stolen when left unattended. Lock it up when not in use or not in your sight. Most large places for research have pay-lockers. Carry your completed disks in your purse, pocket or carry-on but NOT with your laptop. American Express Travel, along with the FAA have issued a notice on how the laptop thefts happen in the airports. Keep your eye on your laptop while it is going through the security checkpoint; be there when it comes out, don't let someone delay your retrieval of it and pick it up immediately. Traveling with two people works well - let one of you go first and then send your laptops through so that the first person can pick them up for the both of you.

(9) Little "necessity items": Coins for copy machines (a good carrying case is an old film canister), or buy a "copy card" when you get there; a magnifying glass; your business cards; plenty of pencils (many places won't allow pens); a beige file folder with a black line drawn on it for film viewers or readers. The color beige helps to diffract the glare of the reader and the black line helps keep you at your place while writing down information.

(10) If you have old photos of people who you don't have a clue as to who they are, copy them onto paper, write "Who are these people?" leaving a space for each persons name, show them to the person who are interviewing or visiting. And your originals stay at home.

From the "Q and A" session following came another idea - when traveling in a foreign country, if you don't speak or read the language which you are researching, perhaps you can ask if there is a student available to aid you in the lan-guage. Also, you can purchase newer laptops with security system setups installed in them.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

by Barbara Dyer

Remember Y2K? The year passed without major disasters from the millennium bug and the computer world, while presently undergoing an adjustment period, has had a remarkable year. We are embarking on a new year and for genealogists, it hold the promise of more and more databases available on the Internet, including the complete Census in it's original format. CD's are available containing scholarly journals such as NGSQ and NEHGR, examples for us to model when writing our own family genealogies. There are complete library catalogues on CD's such as the Family History Library catalogue, allowing us to plan our research down to

the individual film numbers before setting foot out our front door. What an exciting time to be doing research.

When you made your New Year's resolutions, I hope you included genealogy goals for 2001. Here are some recommendations:

- a. I will attend SRVGS meetings every month.
 - b. I will join a SRVGS special interest group.
 - c. I will go on the SRVGS monthly library trips.
 - d. I will take the SRVGS education classes.
 - and last, but not least - e. I will volunteer to help other genealogists by sharing, teaching, mentoring or in some other way promote genealogy research.
- A wonderful New Year to each of you and may this be the year you break through that blocked line.

SRVGS January 2001 Treasurer Report by Nancy Alexander, Treasurer 2000-2001

Fund Balances: 12/31/00

General Fund	3295.33
Hospitality Fund	70.78
Publications Fund	946.72
Special Projects Fund :	200.00
N.A.R.A. Fund	94.00
Cassette Tape Library Fund	72.85
Library Fund:	
Prior Year Gifts & Donations	203.80
Current Year Donations	276.00

Overall Total Balance: \$5159.48

A German First by Fran Schweitzer

On November 1st, the SRGS newly formed German Special Interest Group had their first field trip. Arrangements were made with a mentor in the Sacramento German Society and they had a privately conducted research day. (Lunch was special too - at a Hofbrau)

Special thanks to Sheri Titus for all the arrangements. It was a great day. By the way, it was also a first for the Sacramento German Society to host such a day. It truly was a "first" for both groups. If you are interested in German research, watch the calendar in this newsletter for places and dates for our meetings, or call Fran Schweitzer, 935-5744.

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

SRVGS CALENDAR- January 2001

- 2 **Tuesday** - 10:00 a.m. Board Meeting at home of Barbara Dyer, 617 Camino Amigo in Danville.
- 9, 23 **Tuesday** - 10:00 a.m. Member Education Class, Genealogy on the Internet at the Family History Center on Stone Valley Road. **These classes are full.**
- 16 **Tuesday** - 10:00 a.m. General Meeting at LDS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road on Smith Road, Alamo. From I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east.
- 23 **Tuesday** -9:00 a.m. Library Trip to the California Genealogical Society Library in Oakland. It is located at 16th and Telegraph. Phone: (510) 663-1358. Jane Steiner has negotiated a special rate of \$3.00 per person for our visit. Car pools will meet behind Albertson's off Diablo Road in Danville. Note that the Library Trip Coordinator is Michael Fiorenza. If you sign up for a trip and wish to cancel, please call him at 820-8294.
- 30 **Tuesday** - 10:00 a.m. "Getting Around the Family History Center" presented by Pat Isom at 2949 Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, Alamo.(see Jan. 16th meeting for directions to Library) This class is being offered on Tuesday morning when the Library is usually closed. Please sign up at the general meeting. Learn to use and get the most from the Library Catalog, Family History catalog, International Genealogical Index (IGI)

FEBRUARY

- 5 **Tuesday** 10:00 a.m. Board Meeting, Carol Thompson's Home - 308 Hartford Road, Danville 820-4103.
- 6 & 13 **Tuesday** 10:00 a.m. to noon Genealogy on the Internet at the Family History Center on Stone Valley Road, Alamo. There are a few openings available. Sign up at the general meeting. There are also openings for the March 6 and March 13th classes.
- 20 **Tuesday** 10:00 A.M. General meeting at the LDS Church, Alamo. Member education class to be announced.

SRVGS Special Interest Groups: JANUARY

- GERMAN** - Meets 10 a.m. January 24th (fourth Wednesday) at the home of Helen Odegard, 1408 Entrada Verde Place, in Alamo. If you need directions or if you regularly attend, but cannot attend this meeting, please call her at 932-6796 or e-mail at s_hodie@pacbell.net
- IRISH & CALIF.** - Meets January 10, (second Wednesday of month) at 10:00 a.m. at home of Patty Erickson, 10 Ridge Place in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889.
- PENNSYLVANIA** - This is a new group and will meet January 22 (4th Monday) at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Barbara Johnson, 606 Camino Amigo, in Danville. Phone 837-2153 or e-mail Bjohnson@people.net..
- PORTUGUESE** - Meets third Tuesday of month after the general meeting. Bring a bag lunch. Confirmation of the meeting will be announced at the general meeting. The contact person is Millie Freitas, 837-2483.
- SOUTHERN** - Meets January 9th (second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Peggy Dearman, 749 Morninghome Road, in Danville, (925) 837-1621.
- PUBLISHING** - A future meeting will be scheduled as interested persons express a need. The contact person is Jane Steiner, 238-0867.

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

ROOTS/COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP. This is a genealogy software users group for Personal Computers. Their primary focus has become the use of Master Genealogist. It will be announced if the group will meet after the General Meeting. The distributor of "Ultimate Family Tree" software has announced that it will not be producing newer versions of this product. Customer support services will be dropped after a few months. The contact person is Bob Heacox, e-mail: riponolive@worldnet.att.net. MAC users do not currently have an active user group of SRVGS members.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS:

18 January Thursday: The Mt. Diablo Genealogical Society will meet from 1-3:00 p.m. on the third Thursday in the Community room of the Civic Bank of Commerce, 1940 Tice Valley Road, Walnut Creek. Kitty Froiseth is scheduled to speak.

20 January. Saturday A workshop for advanced researchers will be presented by the Menlo Park Family History Center, from 2:00 till 3:30 p.m. The topic will be "Defense Records from pre-1660" by John Gleed and Inge Harding-Barlow. For information call (650)

25 January..Thursday The Solano County Genealogical Society typically meets 7 p.m. at the Fairfield Senior Center, 1200 Civic Center Drive. Their web site: www.scgsinc.org .

1 February. Thursday 1 to 3:30 p.m. The Genealogy Society of Vallejo meets at the Navel & Historical Museum Auditorium. Bette Kot will speak about "Organizing Your Research."

13 February Tuesday - The Livermore Amador Genealogical Society (LAGS) meets 7:30 p.m. at Beth Emek, corner of College and South M. St. Livermore. For information call Debbie Pizzato, (925) 606-7466.

14 February On the second Wednesday, the San Mateo County Genealogical Society will meet at 525 Middle Road (Belmont Central School), Belmont. 7:30 p.m. Sandra Schafer will speak about "Twentieth Century Research." At the January meeting, Steven Friedman will speak about "Preserving Oral and Family Histories." For information call (650) 572-2929.

17 March Saturday The San Mateo County Genealogical Society presents Myra V. Gormley from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, West 25th Ave. & Hacienda in San Mateo. \$21 for non-members. Contact John Gleed at (650) 294-7580 or e-mail john.s.gleed@worldnet.att.net.

17 March - Saturday Family History Day at the California State Archives in Sacramento. It is scheduled for Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Admission is free. Information: Calif. State Archives at www.ss.ca.gov/archives/archives_g.htm or Sacramento Genealogical Society at www.rootsweb.com/~carcsgs/rootcellar.html

24 March- Saturday The Sonoma County Genealogical Society presents a seminar in Santa Rosa featuring Helen Leary. The theme will be "Clutching at Straws and Other Last Ditch Efforts". Registration is \$18 for non-members. Call Audrey Phillips (707) 683-4492. Other info: www.rootsweb.com/~cascgs/leary.htm.

16-19 May - NGS Conference will be in Portland, Or. Phone 1-800-473-0060 or see www.ngsgenealogy.org.

WE NEED YOU

.....to tell us about an artifact or an object that you found that lead you to some "great" genealogical discovery. Please name the object, describe it in a few sentences. Tell us how it helped you and give or send your writing to one of the Program Committee. We will choose the most interesting story and/or artifact. Those chosen will tell their tale at our May meeting. Program Committee members:

Dorothy Baker
1239 Moss court
Pittsburg, Ca 94565 427-4883
DJBdorothy@cs.com

Helen Odegard
1408 Entrada Verde Place
Alamo 94507 932-6796
s-hodie@pacbell.net

Clyde Walden
515 Silver Lake Drive
Danville, 94526 837-4344

NEW MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION TO ADD TO ROSTER

Please make these additions and changes to your membership list

Change of address:

Dorothy Baker
1239 Moss Court
Pittsburg, Ca 94565 427-4883
DJBDorothy@cs.com

Mary Darling
2413 Stirrup court
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

New Members:

Bob & Jane Singleton
624 Sky Hy Circle
Lafayette CA 94549 Phone: 283-1547
e-mail: RRMJSING1@aol.com

Stanley & Martha Sundeen
34 Dartmouth Place
Danville, CA 94526 Phone: 837-4618

Satu H. Woodland
100 Oak View Terrace
Danville, CA 94526 Phone: 831-8001
e-mail: Satu214@aol.com

Books & Tapes To Investigate

For more information about German research, you may want to listen to the following tapes from our tape library:

- C-56 COLONIAL GERMAN IMMIGRATION
by Peggy Jonner
- C-87 BASIC PROCEDURES IN GERMAN
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH by Larry
Jensen
- C-88 RESOLVING COMMON AND UNUSUAL
GERMAN RESEARCH PROBLEMS by Larry
Jensen
- C-90 GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN EASTERN
GERMAN RECORDS by Larry Jensen
- M-33 RESEARCH IN GERMANY by Kate Prunte
- M-58 GERMAN RESEARCH by Paul Mueller
- C-124 FINDING YOUR NINETEENTH-CENTURY
GERMAN IMMIGRANT by Wm. Schoeffler
- C-154 TRACING THE ORIGINS OF YOUR 18TH
CENTURY GERMAN ANCESTORS by Henry
Z. Jones, Jr.
- C-172A GERMAN & AMERICAN SOURCES FOR
GERMAN EMIGRATION TO AMERICA by
Michael P. Palmer

C-172B GERMAN CHURCH AND CIVIL RECORDS
by Michael P. Palmer
and there are more

Also, see these books in our collection at the Danville Library:

ADDRESS BOOK FOR GERMANIC GENEALOGY,
Sixth Edition - by Ernest Thode. R929.10893
Thode

GERMAN-ENGLISH GENEALOGICAL
DICTIONARY by Ernest Thode. R929.103 Thode

THE GERMAN RESEARCH COMPANION by
Shirley Reimer

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOG OF GERMAN
RESEARCH MATERIALS at the Family History
Center, Published by the Sacramento German
Genealogy Society, 1999.
(Cataloging in process)
Friedelsheim Mennonite Congregation Churchbook,
compiled by Ellen Risser Farrell (cataloging in
process).

PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN IMMIGRANTS, 1709-
1786, Edited by Don Yoder (Cataloging in process)

CENSUS TRIVIA

from "Tree Tips" compiled by Janice Ramey Lear,
SearchNotes, Vol. 14, No. 4, p. 14-29.

As we near the completion of the 2000 census, it is interesting to note some facts about the previous one.

It is estimated that, during the 1990 Federal Census, about two million, or 3.2 percent, of the children were not counted. This was twice the undercount rate for the total U.S. population, 1.6%

William P. O'Hare, Ph.D.; the Overlooked
Undercounted: Children Missed in the Decennial
Census; 21 July 1999.

The top ten surnames in the 1990 Federal Census, are as follows: Smith, Johnson, Williams, Jones, Brown, Davis, Miller, Wilson, Moore and Taylor
U.S. Census Bureau

I'm not stuck, I'm Ancestrally Challenged!
Whadya mean, my grandparents didn't have any kids?
Only a genealogist regards a step backwards as progress.

READING OLD TOMBSTONES

from TipWorld - <http://www.tipworld.com>

Referred by Barbara Dittig

Wind, rain and the simple ravages of time can wreak havoc on tombstones, making them almost impossible to read. If you've tried all the conventional methods of deciphering the writing on a tombstone, (rubbing the stone face onto paper with chalk, rubbing dirt in the cracks, etc.) Don't forget that there are others who may have read the stones before you.

In the 1950's, a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project involved the readings of tombstones all across the country. See if you can locate the WPA reading for the cemetery you've interested in, or possibly locate a reading from another group such as a local church or genealogical society.

Still no luck? Find the trustee of the cemetery records, if there is one. If not, try the local churches that keep records of burials in their own (or other) cemeteries. City Halls often keep records of cemetery plots and stones; county recorder's offices often maintain land records for sale of plots.

As a last resort, search through old death records and accumulate a list of all those buried in a particular cemetery. The cemetery in which a person is buried is generally listed on the death certificate and is public record in most states

The Genealogy Searching Center

(<http://genealogysearch.org.htm#new>) for the

Ahnenforschung.net a German genealogy search engine and directory.

Some other sites to check this month are:

<http://www.findagrave.com>. This site caters to both celebrity buffs (with final resting places of thousands of stars) but also includes burial records for 2.5 million ordinary folks and data on 100,000 U.S. graveyards.

<http://memory.loc.gov> is a site you can browse through for hours. You can find sheet music of old World War I songs, and an incredible number of memory provoking items. At

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mdbquery.html> you can view movies of immigrants landing at Ellis Island. The film was taken July 9, 1903.

HOW CAN YOU STORE AND PRESERVE OLD PHOTOS?

Although we don't know what the technology will be in the future, and whether our descendants will be able to access our photos that we have stored so carefully on our CD's, nor what the "shelf life" of a CD will be, at the moment, it seems to be the best way to concisely store and save the images we have struggled so hard to obtain and save. But, for those of us who are still gathering this information here is a little advice:

Scan your photos at about 2000-3000 dpi in order to get all of the information off the print. This number will vary a little depending on the quality of the original. Now the disadvantage of this is BIG files! So, you can change the size of the picture and then lower the dpi to 450 for printing. Then save your pictures at 8"x 5.4" and 450 dpi on a CD-R. With this you might be able to find names of buildings, cars, and houses that would never have been seen without enlarging the photo. Some of these details can put pieces together for the family history.

Now, how do you save the original print? Of course you need to have PVC free materials. Here are a few websites to check out for supplies:
<http://www.universityproducts.com/main.php3>
<http://www.ArchivalSuppliers.com/shop/>
<http://globalgenealogy.com/archival.htm>
<http://www.danielsmith.net/storesense/scripts/store.exe/search?category=Archival-Res>.

INTERNET LINKS & REFERENCES



One of the best places to start for German research on the Internet is Cyndi's list (<http://www.Cyndislist.com/germany.htm>). From this German/ Deutschland page, you can link to 15 or more pages of German

Genealogy Web Sites. Some of these include: General Resource Sites; Government & Cities, History & Culture, Language Handwriting and Script (and this even includes a place where you can enter what you think is the phrase, and you will get back a translation), Libraries Archives & Museums (which includes the Bavarian State Library and Bavarian Library Network), German Genealogy Word List.

Family Search (<http://familysearch.com>) (the LDS Church searchable records.). Here you can search on "location".

SPEAKING OF CEMETERIES

The National Cemetery Administration is a division of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. They have undertaken an extensive project to verify the burial records in their database. An extensive column on the project by Steve Paul Johnson can be found in *The Cemetery Column* (1 August 2000), an electronic journal on everything associated with genealogy and cemeteries: <http://www.interment.net/column/records/nca/index.htm>. The home page of the site provides links to many cemetery transcriptions in the US and Canada as well as Great Britain.

CGSA Newsletter, Vol. 18, No. 11 (Nov. 2000)

The Mountain View Public Library boasts a new database, (The Mountain View History Database) which is an index to Mountain View obituaries back to 1967. Earlier obituaries are being added retrospectively. You can search by the name of the deceased as well as by survivors. Newspapers indexed include the Mountain View Voice, Los Altos town Crier, San Jose Mercury and the Peninsula Times Tribune. To access the database, log onto HYPERLINK at <http://www.ci.mtnview.ca.us/>. Click on search the catalog, then scroll to "search Other Databases" and click on "Mountain View History Database."

CSGA Newsletter, Vol 18, No. 11 (November 2000)

DON'T DEPEND ON THOSE VIDEOTAPES

I have some very dear, irreplaceable video-tapes. They are so precious that I keep them in my safe deposit box. Videos of my children when they were young, especially. However, an article in *Industrial Photography Magazine*, "Videotape is Dead" by William J. Staples reports that SONY in Japan sets the maximum lifespan of videotape at 15 years, assuming ideal conditions. He tells of the curator at a major air and space museum who, upon receiving videotapes of the original and ONLY declassified filming of the SOLE flight of an experimental plane, complete with close-ups of the still unsolved midair disintegration, opened the box only to find a ribbon of clear acetate and a pile of brown powder.

It seems that after a few years, the oxide starts dropping off videotape like so much dandruff. The most practical solution, if you want to preserve the images on the tapes is to transfer it to motion picture film, which, properly stored, lasts about 50 years. Another suggestion is to retape your videotapes every 8 or 10 years and make sure you date them. Also, remember, don't throw away those old movies you've had transferred to videotape.

Source: *The Live Oak Bi-monthly newsletter of the East Bay Genealogical Society*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, Jan/Feb. 1999, also *Contra Costa county Genealogical Society* Vol. 15, No. 7, August 2000.

SPARKING FAMILY MEMORIES

by Juliana Smith

Did you miss the opportunity, during the holidays, to enhance your family history. "The holidays, and the ensuing family get-togethers that often accompany them, provide family historians with opportunities to gather information from relatives that can really give research efforts a boost. The clues found in family stories and other details missing from our family histories can often be found in the memories of family members. But, sometimes, getting information from these relatives can be a bit like pulling teeth. So, how do we get them to part with that much desired information without seeming pushy? Here are a few suggestions that can help you avoid having to resort to bright lights and interrogation techniques.

MAKE PEOPLE FEEL COMFORTABLE

It is a great idea to videotape or audiotape your conversation with family members to get all the facts straight, but some people may not feel comfortable and may not open up as much with the recorders rolling. If you sense that is the case, then take notes in a small notepad. It may be a better way to preserve the information they share. Then, as soon as possible after the event rewrite your notes in more detail so that you remember more clearly what you were writing. How many times have you looked at your notes, months later, and wondered "who wrote this gibberish"?

SET THE STAGE

Conversation often begins with comments on the surroundings. Do a little preplanning. Old family photos, a framed family tree (in a prominent place), heirlooms or ornamentation from holidays past, and old family recipes can all conspire to turn conversations to your family's past. Also, copies of old photos and printed ancestral charts shared with the family can spark memories and begin a discussion on the ancestors.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Family gatherings are a great place to fill in the holes in family stories. Pointed questions may bring to light details that can later be verified with records, proving or disproving the legend. If the story is widely known, you might also want to ask different relatives individually how they remember the story and compare the versions, looking for the common threads and the variations.

A SMOOTH TRANSITION

Talk about current events can also be turned to topics of the past and can jog memories. Talk about the current election can be turned to talk about past elections that stand out in the minds of older family members. Was the family politically active? Did anyone in the family ever hold public office? Were they affiliated with a particular political party? Where and how did they get their news?

Continued on page 8

Discussions about holidays past can also hold clues. What special traditions did your family observe? What kind of food was served? What was the happiest holiday season you remember? Who was typically present at family celebrations?

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Once you get things going, you can prod memories with the right questions. For instance, if you are looking for the date of a particular event, you might ask who else was there. Known death dates of those in attendance, or knowing who would have been available to attend the event at that time might help narrow down the time frame. What was the weather like - was it summer or winter? If the event took place at a home, where was it? This information coupled with the facts found in directories, can help you determine what years your family lived in a residence.

Use the information you have to help you formulate your questions in a way that will stimulate the memories of those that were present.

MAKE NOTE OF THE PRESENT

In your quest for the past, don't forget to make note of the present. New babies may have been born and baptized this year, couples married, and dear family members departed. While your family members are present, it is a good time to write down these facts and important dates in their lives.

Source: *Ancestry Weekly Digest* 23 November 2000

Research hint:

When I am lucky enough to find a town of ancestral interest in Germany or Russia (where names and boundary lines have changed many times), I note the longitude and latitude for quick reference on future maps.

Deanna Greenwald
Lingle, Wyoming



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