

# SAN RAMON VALLEY

## GENEALOGICAL

## SOCIETY



### NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. XVII No. 3

October 2001

### THIS MONTH - October 16, 2001

#### CONTRA COSTA CORONERS OFFICE - COMMANDER TOM MOORE

The Coroner's Office is part of the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department. Commander Tom Moore has been part of this department since 1987. He has had responsibility for criminal investigations of felony crimes, has managed the operations of the Main Detention Facility and directed the activities of many officers throughout his history in the department. He is currently the Commander of the Field Operations Bureau. His program will consist of (1) history of Contra Costa County Coroner's Office; (2) Records available (3) how to obtain a death certificate and (4) other sources for information such as Web sites.

### LAST MEETING- September 18, 2001

#### Basic Genealogy Records in England and Wales

Notes by Lee Schlenker

If you couldn't make it to our September meeting, you, unfortunately, missed a wonderful and thorough talk on finding roots in England and Wales. John Gleed, a retired DuPont employee, now a lecturer, became interested in genealogy and a member of the San Mateo Genealogy Society. John will join us again in November for a continuation of this lecture on Parish Registers. He supplied us with information, maps, web sites and a good knowledge of how to go about finding information on ancestors throughout England and Wales starting with records in the early 1800s and as far back as the 1600s. This lecture covered Civil Registration - Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates, the Census, and Wills (since 1858).

**CIVIL REGISTRATION** - starting in 1837 these three events were to cover the life of all people of England and Wales. These were forwarded to a central office each quarter of each year to be recorded. Each event - birth, marriage, death - generated a certificate on a standardized form providing information (especially great for all of us now). **Birth Certificates** are valuable because they show the names of both parents (mother's maiden name). You can follow the child's date of birth and information on parents back to a Marriage Certificate and perhaps find elder siblings. Often a birth date could preclude a marriage date since men needed to make sure their future wife could bear them children who would be around to help them in their old

age. If no father's name is on the birth certificate it could mean the child was illegitimate. **Marriage Certificates** are the most valuable out of the three event records. There are four names listed on them: bride, groom, both fathers and occupations of all four persons shown. Up until 1870 the ages shown were "full age" meaning at least 21 years old. After 1870 the age listed was the age at the last birthday which is helpful when working back to the birth certificate. There was a "condition" column referring to the person's marital status before marriage. Usually "bachelor" and "spinster" or "widower" and/or "widow" if previously married. In rare instances the word "divorced" might be shown and that usually meant your ancestor had money! **Death Certificates** these are the least valuable of the civil registration records. They may have one or two useful names; the informant may not have known the deceased very well so the age could be wrong; the informant could have been a child of the deceased; and/or a married daughter providing a married name. The indexes for each of these three events exists. Copies of certificates were collected by District Registrars who forwarded them to London every quarter. The date on the Indexes will be the last month of that quarter and the year (Mar 1870). There were nearly 700 Registration Districts; the volume of paper was immense so some

errors and omissions crept into the system. Certificates were alphabetized by surname and given name. Excerpted information was *handwritten* into very large Quarterly Index Books (each weighing about 15 lbs.) housed at the Family Records Centre in London. The Centre is open to the public and often crowded. The Indexes are not by date of the event but by date of receipt. If you have an event occurring towards the end of a quarter you might find it listed in the next quarter. These Indexes are available at LDS on microfilm and microfiche. Across the Bay Area, in one place or another, there is microfiche available for viewing these books from 1837 to 1845. The actual certificates are NOT available on microfilm or fiche. To order a certificate you must provide the *exact* information: 1) year & quarter, 2) surname & given name, 3) Registration District name, 4) volume #, 5) page #.

**CENSUSES** - The first attempt to count the people of England was in 1801. The government was concerned about the rapid loss of agricultural laborers to factories in bigger towns and cities. By 1841 Parliament decided to ask for names of all the people, their health, family structure and internal migration. And by 1851 the "bugs" were out of the census and a good format was applied to the census of 1861 to 1891. The census from 1841 to 1891 have all names in the household listed. The census for 1881 is transcribed and fully indexed with name, household members, relationships, address, birth place (country, county, parish and town), occupation and enumerated. The census is done every 10 years, except for 1931 (destroyed to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands) and 1941 (WWII). The 100 Year Exclusionary rule applies to the English census to protect the privacy of it's citizens. 1901 census should be out in April next year. There are Census Index booklets on shelves in Salt Lake City, Family History Libraries, compact disks, but not too much on the web itself. *Helpful Hint:* For a rare name, you may find it interesting to search all of England in the 1881 census. John did just that for 4 unusual Devon names and the matrix of information which developed increased his understanding of their places of origin.

**WILLS** (after 1858) - Fewer than 10% of persons made wills and you might think it unlikely that you will find information on your family. The records since 1858 are in *one* place - the Principal Registry of the Family Division at First Avenue House in London. John says, "you may find a few more clues and even some new names in Index Excerpts or the wills themselves." Modern Wills are listed in Annual Indexes at this location. These are *Abstracts* of the wills often containing as much information as the original will. Index Books and Wills to 1929 have been filmed by LDS. If you need more info on the whole will and for ordering you can go to: [courtservice.gov.uk/fandl/prob\\_guidance](http://courtservice.gov.uk/fandl/prob_guidance)

**The Militia** - Nearly all adult males should be on a Militia List.

London has over 30 different offices in which to find genealogy information. They are listed on the hand-out. If you are renting the tape, the hand-out should be available for you to copy and return.

Other websites:

**genuki.org.uk** One of the better web sites to use; has county info, uncomplicated and well managed.  
**familysearch.org** LDS website; largest collection of English materials in one place in their catalog.  
**sog.org.uk** Society of Genealogists; excellent Parish Register transcripts collection.

### SRVGS CALENDAR - OCTOBER 2001

2 Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. Board Meeting at the Lloyd's home, 210 Town and Country Drive, in Danville.

16 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 2 & 1/3 miles. The speaker will be Commander Tom Moore of the Contra Costa County Coroner's Office.

18 Thursday - 10 a.m. to Noon. Member Education Class, "Accessing the Federal Census Records," will be presented by Millie Freitas at her home, 607 Diablo Road in Danville. Her home is near Hwy 680. Please phone her (837-2483) for directions. Readers, sample material and index books are available to get you started.

23 Tuesday - 9:40 a.m. Departure Time for the Library Trip to the Pleasanton City Library, 400 Old Bernal Avenue. Tel 462-3535. Carpools will meet behind Albertson's, off Diablo Road in Danville. The Library Trip Coordinator is Michael Fiorenza. If you sign up for a trip and wish to cancel, please call him at 820-8294. Please note that this is not the typical departure time. The Livermore Amador Genealogical Society maintains a collection of over 1000 books here, and they have recently added sixty new ones. Interested SRVGS members may search the Pleasanton Library catalog from the Internet with the following URL address: <http://millennium.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/search> >

## November 2001

- 6 Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. Board Meeting
- 13 Tuesday - 10:00 a.m. General Meeting at LDS Church on Stone Valley Road. The speaker will be Mr. John Gleed. The topic will be Earlier English Genealogy. This will be the second presentation of a two part series.
- 27 Tuesday 9:00 a.m. Library trip to the Sutro Library in San Francisco. Please note that this is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

### SRVG SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

**GERMAN** - This group will plan to meet on October 24th (fourth Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. at the home of Helen Odegard, 1408 Entrada Verde Place, in Alamo. Phone 932-6796 or e-mail [s\\_hodie@pacbell.net](mailto:s_hodie@pacbell.net). If you need directions or cannot attend please let her know.

**IRISH & CALIF.** - Their meeting date is October 10, (second Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Rae Atwood in Moraga. Her address is 36 Pembroke Court. Phone 376- 7527

**NEW ENGLAND** - This group will not meet in October.

**PORTUGUESE** - This group usually meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month after the general meeting. Confirmation of the meeting will be announced at the general meeting. Bring a bag lunch. The contact person is Millie Freitas, phone: 837-2483

**SCANDINAVIA** - Those persons interested in Scandinavian research do not meet as a group. They form e-mail groups for each country. The contact person is Marilyn Tanner, phone 376-6733 or e-mail [jtanner@nothingbutnet.net](mailto:jtanner@nothingbutnet.net).

**SOUTHERN** - This group will meet October 9th (second Tuesday of the month) at 10:00 a.m. at the Family History Center on Stone Valley Road, in Alamo. The contact person is Frances Becker, phone 934-4962.

**PUBLISHING** - A future meeting will be scheduled as interested persons express a need. The contact person is Dorothy Stanton, [dpstant@hotmail.com](mailto:dpstant@hotmail.com)

**INTERNET** - Interested users communicate via e-mail. Members should contact Robert daRoza, [vraroza@ix.netcom.com](mailto:vraroza@ix.netcom.com) to be included.

**COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP** - They will meet Tuesday, October 16th after the general meeting at about 12:30 p.m. at the home of Jack and Barbara Johnson, 616 Camino Amigo in Danville. Bring a bag lunch. Phone

837-2153 or e-mail [bcj616@earthlink.net](mailto:bcj616@earthlink.net) This is a genealogy software users group for PC's and will focus on the use of Master Genealogist.. Peggy Dearman, [dearman@pacbell.net](mailto:dearman@pacbell.net) will be the contact person for the group. MAC users do not currently have an active user group of SRVGS members.

### CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

#### SRVGS OCTOBER 2001

9 October, Tuesday The Livermore Amador Genealogical Society (LAGS), meets 7:30 p.m. at Beth Emek, 1866 College at South M St., Livermore...

11 October, Thursday The Contra Costa County Genealogical Society regular meeting, 7:30 p.m. at LDS Church, 3700 Concord Ave., in Concord. Jo Russell of Sonoma County will be the speaker.

13 October, Saturday The Concord Family History Center will sponsor their annual all-day fall seminar. Six class periods begin at 9 a.m. at LDS Church, 3700 Concord Ave.. For further information, call Sandra Ruefenacht 798-8998 (daytime) or 672-2108 (evenings).

20 October Saturday The San Mateo County Genealogy Society presents an all day seminar on how to use the "Master Genealogist" software program. The seminar will be held at Sequoia Union High School Tech Center, 480 James Street, Redwood City, Ca.. For further details, see: [www.smccgs.org](http://www.smccgs.org)

20 October, Saturday The Sacramento Genealogy Society presents Nora Hickey, The Irish Researcher. P.O. Box 265, Citrus Heights, CA 95611 or see: [www.rootseb.com/~carcsgs/rootcellar.html](http://www.rootseb.com/~carcsgs/rootcellar.html)

27 October Saturday NGS Regional Conference from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 1221 Chess Drive in Foster City. Speakers will be Curt Witcher and Cyndi Howells. \$50 registration fee for non-members. \$20 for a luncheon hosted by NGS. The local host is CGS, [www.calgensoc.org/events/ngsconf.htm](http://www.calgensoc.org/events/ngsconf.htm)

1 November Thursday Genealogical Society of Vallejo-Benecia meet 1 p.m. at the Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum, 734 Marin St. in Vallejo. Mary Higham and Linda VinZant will speak about "Profiling Your Ancestors."

3 November Saturday The Monterey County Genealogical Society presents Central Coast Conference Featuring Curt Witcher, president of NGS and Department Manager at Allen County Public Library. \$35 for the first 165 registrants. Contact Jeannie Pederson (831) 4841-9350 or [milleriw@mbay.net](mailto:milleriw@mbay.net)

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE-October 2001**

by Francie Lloyd

**T**is the season for witches, ghosts, and goblins. Do you have a real (?) witch in your background? Proving this lineage can be a challenge. One of the tests was to put the alleged witch in a large pond of water. If he/she was able to swim to shore, then yes, this person was surely a witch and was quickly put to death. If he/she was not able to swim and drowned - then no, the person was not a witch! You may have a friendly spirit about. Have you ever been drawn to a particular book on a library shelf? Have you ever accidentally happened upon a wonderful document or had a newspaper clipping fall out of a book? Well, it's something to think about. I'm not at all sure where the goblins come in.

I understand that this year fireman and policeman costumes are very popular. Do you have one of these public servants in your background. Employment records, pensions records, newspaper articles are places to start your search. Was an ancestor a doctor, a railroad engineer, a sailor, an entertainer, or a person of unsavory repute? Each of these occupations created a paper trail - a license, a pension, a military record, a billboard or newspaper notice, or perhaps a police record. Go find them!

If you are of German, Irish, Southern, Portuguese, or New England decent we have a special interest group for you. The Roots Group is now officially a TMG group. The Mac group and the publishing group offer help as requested- call Barbara Dyer. The internet research group offers encouragement and shares new discoveries on the net. Special thanks to Carol Huvane, who coordinates these special interest groups. Check the calendar page for times and locations. For additional information or if you are interested in an additional group, do give Carol a call.

Our board meetings are the first Tuesday of the month, coffee at 9:30 a.m. meeting at 10:00 a.m. You are most welcome to join us.

Hope to see you on the 16th.

**Newsletter Team:**

|                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Coordinator: Sharon Clay           | 462-4518                 |
|                                    | sharoncl@ix.netcom.com   |
| Special Contributor: Pat Isom      | 820-2660                 |
| Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke | 838-8570                 |
|                                    | e-mail: V.M. SEG@att.net |
| Mailing::                          |                          |
| Barbara Dittig                     | 648-9364                 |
| Lucy Carver                        | 837-3146                 |

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

**Treasurer's Report-SEPTEMBER 2001**

by Marilynn Tanner

**Income:**

|                     |       |                  |
|---------------------|-------|------------------|
| Beginning Balance:  |       | <b>\$6297.27</b> |
| Dues:               | 15.00 |                  |
| NARA Contributions: | 1.00  |                  |

**Expenses:**

|                              |        |                  |
|------------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Program Costs                | 52.90  |                  |
| Newsletter                   | 117.90 |                  |
| Balance as of Sept. 30, 2001 |        | <b>\$6142.47</b> |

**Fund Balances:**

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| General Fund               | 4,404.67 |
| Hospitality fund           | 150.78   |
| Publication Fund           | 665.07   |
| Special Projects Fund      | 500.00   |
| NARA Income                | 96.00    |
| Cassette Tape Library Fund | 128.79   |
| Library Fund               | 638.76   |

Current Total Balance

**\$6142.47****TAPE LIBRARY FINDINGS**

For more information about finding genealogical data in

Vital Records - check out these tapes from our tape library:

**C-132** - How Did They Die? Locating death records and creating medical files. By Martha Hoffman-Rising

**C-156** Getting The Most Out of Death Certificates.

By Desmond Walls Allen

**C-127** From Safe to Your Shelf: Massachusetts Vital Records By Jay M. Hollbrook

**C-205** Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths: Province of Ontario By Brenda Dougall Merrimac

**And don't forget those cemetery reference tapes:**

**M-14** Collecting Dead Relatives - by LaVerne Galeener-Moor

**M-15** Tombstones - by Mary Ellen Jones

**C-69** Beyond The Inscription: Gathering full Cemetery Info. By Pat Geyh - (with handouts)

**C-89** Looking Beyond Tombstones In Cemetery Research. By Renee Jackson Smith - (with handouts).

**Borrowed From Other Newsletters:**

**From Contra Costa County Genealogical Society - September 2001** (permission to use requested)

When trying to obtain a Death Certificate from the State of California do this:

"1. For faster results, order certificates directly from the County because the county receives payment for the certificate. Also, if a problem should develop, since the county has already received payment, it is in a position to make another copy of the certificate.

2. The CA Dept. Of Vital Records has recently opened a walk-up window in Sacramento for those persons applying in person. Certificates ordered they will be mailed out in two days.

3. For those marriages where the county of the event is not known, after consulting its index, the State refers all such requests to the County. Therefore, it might be faster if these certificates were ordered at the walk-up window in Sacramento too."

Ed. Note: You might try checking the State Index on the Internet first, and save yourself a trip to Sacramento and a bit of time.

**WITNESSES:**

Stuck in your genealogy research? Before you conclude you have no clues to follow; go back to all your source documents and record all people mentioned. For example: ministers, bondsmen and witnesses on marriages and wills; chain carriers, land surveyors and neighbors on land transactions; godparents on baptisms. You never know when and where these people will appear again in your research.

Some genealogy programs have a box labeled "witnesses". Don't let the fact that they are called witnesses "box in" your thinking! Witnesses can be any role that a person plays in the event being recorded. (Excerpted from "Witnesses & the Roles They Play" by Jeri Steele, NGS/CIG Digest, July/Aug. '96 (NVBGS Wine Press, vol 27 #6 June 2001.)

**ANCESTRY QUICK TIPS:**

Who are all those people in my mother's old photo albums? "Hey," I thought, "what a great afternoon project when I'm visiting Mom!" I set up a video camera on a tripod, facing down at the album, plugged in two cheap lavalier microphones - one for me and one for Mom, and a video-out cord to the TV so Mom could see what I was shooting. I would just ask her to tell me about the photo and the people in it, probing with additional questions occasionally. No special tricks, just move the album around under the camera, turning pages when needed and zooming in when helpful. When we finished, about a month later, we had four-plus hours of video

that do a remarkable job of telling her life story, both good times and bad. The fact that the camera wasn't pointed at HER seemed to make the experience not intimidating for her. Now that she's passed away, my brothers and I treasure those tapes and know that future generations will as well.

Ron Carlson

**BEWARE!!!! Worth Repeating**

**Watch for genealogy Scams such as family discovery.com** They charge services to your credit card and don't come through. They have a very enticing come-on. I have been e-mailed with their solicitation twice in the past week. They sound quite legitimate and ARE NOT!!

**SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP**

Have you ever gotten to such a brick wall that you have considered getting a professional to help you get through it? Or, perhaps you live in a distant area from the ancestor you are seeking and really needed someone close to the source to help get the information you need. You may need to hire a researcher:

- ★ When record language presents a research hindrance
- ★ When onsite research is necessary
- ★ When research requires special expertise or experience
- ★ When you do not have the time yourself
- ★ When you need help with writing or editing or any combination of these reasons.

How do you find the right person? How do you know how much it will cost? How much time should be allowed? This article is one of a series in Ancestry Daily News Archives that might help you. It is retrievable on-line at <http://www.ancestry.com/library/view/news/articles> then search under the title or author's name.

**Seeking Professional Help**

**By Michael John Neill**

(excerpted from Ancestry Daily News - July 18, 2001)

I was stuck. The problem centered on a 1910 era birth in Chicago, involved several marriages, a divorce and other information that was not fitting together. While I have used lookup requests in the past, this problem was beyond a simple lookup and was going to require the use of many records. I had done what I could via mail. I had used listserves and bulletin boards effectively in my search for information. However, in this case, given the relatively recent nature of the problem and other factors, I decided not to post my search requests publicly.

While I live a little over two hours from Chicago, time did not allow me to be there for several days during the

Continued on page 6)

week. I also knew that someone familiar with the locality and the records could search them more efficiently than I could. I decided to hire someone to perform the research for me. There were several things I needed to do before I actively sought out a researcher and got the project underway.

- 1) Gather all the information I had on the family.
- 2) Determine a budget for the project
- 3) Determine exactly what I wanted the researcher to try and prove/disprove.

The first step is critical for several reasons. The person I hire needs to know what records I have already used and what those records contained. There is no need to pay to duplicate searches that have already been conducted. Those who **cite their searches** as they go are much better prepared to hire someone to help them get "over the research hump" than those who do not. The time period I searched and the name variants I used are also important as well. In some cases it is necessary for the professional to know which *version* of a published reference I was using as not all editions of printed materials are created equally. Nor are two indexes to the same record exactly the same.

Additionally, gathering and organizing the material I had made me refocus on the problem. It pays to be familiar with the research problem someone else is working on for you. It also causes you to notice leads that have been left to wilt. You may be able to follow up on these clues yourself. You may discover you have more information than originally thought and a quick lookup may be sufficient to get the research going again, and you don't need extra help. But, a re-analysis of your information may make it clear that the research is beyond your ability or expertise.

I made copies of all the records I had for my problem, then re-read and re-analyzed all this material and typed up a synopsis. I was also able to obtain some material locally that had a direct bearing on the problem. **All of this must be done before the decision to hire a researcher has been made.** You should not be dribbling the information to the researcher as they are making their research plan or conducting research for you.

*It is important to make a clear distinction between fact, opinion, and "thoughts from the gut".*

### **Budgeting**

The fee researchers charge will vary, but it is likely it is not going to be \$5 an hour. This is especially true if the person you hire supports themselves entirely by researching. There are some who research "for fun" and just to "make extra cash" and frequently these fees are lower. You may also encounter researchers who charge \$100 per hour. Likely what

you will pay will be less than \$100 per hour, but more than \$5 per hour. A high fee is not necessarily indicative of high quality, just as a low fee is not indicative of low-quality.

How much can you afford? Remember that billable hours often include time spent organizing material and compiling a summary report. If your material is organized when you send it to the researcher, they will spend less time organizing it for you.

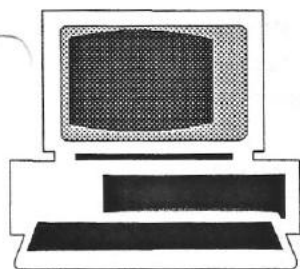
*Why have a summary report?* So you know what was researched and what it was researched for and whether or not it contained information related to the case. The researcher will also need to be reimbursed for copy expenses, document fees, and postage. These fees are set by the agencies holding the records being utilized. In some cases, parking fees, tolls, meals, (*ed. note: mileage and travel time*) and other expenses may also be incurred.

You may want to decide on a certain number of hours instead of a certain amount. The researcher should (within limits) be able to provide you with a suggested research plan based upon your constraints. Remember that some problems are not easily or inexpensively solved. The researcher you hire should not guarantee to solve your problem in a fixed number of hours or with a fixed amount of money. You are paying him or her to search records and report results. Remember also, that you may not be able to solve your problem based upon your budget. In this case you may wish to ask the researcher if they are willing to spend an hour or two providing (for a fee) a consult on your problem. Perhaps it's just direction that you need. Not all researchers perform this service, nor do they have to. They know their schedules and what services they feel comfortable performing.

### **What Do You Want Done?**

You must be clear and specific. The initial problem should be focused and not cover an entire family or group of people. The focus also allows the potential researcher to better assist you and determine if they have access to materials likely to answer your questions. In some cases research may simply involve one type of record. However before you go out and hire someone to research a series of records you should gain a rough idea of what those records contain and determine if they are likely to solve your problem.

Know that you are not paying for guaranteed names, you are paying for research.



## Searching For Ancestors On the Internet

by Juliana Smith  
Ancestry Daily News.

Searching the vast and growing expanse of the Internet can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. There is a wealth of information available, but with the rapid proliferation of sites, even the search engines are having a hard time keeping up. In a study, researchers discovered that of the eleven search engines reviewed, the most comprehensive results came from Northern Light (<http://www.northernlight.com>). [But beware of the "for fee" sites linked to this site]

While results can be disheartening, keep in mind there are differences between search engines that may enable you to find what you are looking for with one engine, even though another turns up nothing. There are also "metasearch" engines that search several of the top search engines simultaneously and give the top results. Metacrawler (<http://www.go2net.net/search.html>) is one such engine.

Finding a search engine is relatively simple. Both Netscape and Internet Explorer browsers have a search feature on the toolbar that provide a selection of engines to choose from.

Once you have found a search engine, you need to establish a goal. While it is fun to just browse around the Internet aimlessly, and you might get lucky and hit upon some information you had not thought to look for, you will get much better results if you set a goal for your research. Are you looking for a surname Web site for one of names you are researching? Or maybe you are looking for a particular record online, or information on where to find that particular record. Or you might want to know what records are available for a particular area.

Whatever you decide, you will want to keep track of your searches and the results in a **research log**. This can save countless hours re-searching the same databases or checking out the same sites. It will also let you know when the last time you checked in a particular location for those instances where the database or site is update periodically. There are several sites that have downloadable forms to help you keep track of your searches. Start with Cyndislist.com then search on "forms".

If you don't get the desired results with your first search, try rewording it. A search for "minnesota naturalization records" can turn up different results than one for "minnesota naturalizations". You can also refine your search using Boolean operators. For more information on Boolean

searches, Michael John Neill wrote a helpful article on the subject, which is available online at: [http://www.ancestry.com/dailynews/01\\_19\\_99.htm](http://www.ancestry.com/dailynews/01_19_99.htm).

There are also several "genealogy-specific" search engines available as well. These can help weed out much of the unrelated hits that are found in general searches. The LDS Web site is <http://www.familysearch.com>. GenPageFinder is another such search engine and is available at Ancestry.com at: <http://www.ancestry.com/genpagefinder/genpagefinder.htm>. It searches specific names or phrases within publications. Don't overlook non-traditional sources for background history. These is a plethora of sites with historical information, photos, and maps - sites that can really bring your ancestry into focus. But, no matter where or how you choose to search, you are bound to run into something of value, so dust off that keyboard and surf.

## Looking for More Internet References?

If you haven't had your fill of Internet references by checking Cyndislist.com and the above references, and you want something "in hand" to look up and check off - the following two books were reviewed by George G. Morgan in *Genealogical Computing*, Fall 2000.

### E-Genealogy: Finding Your Family Roots Online

by Terri Stephens Lamb. Published by Sams Publishing 2000. 228 pages. Index. Softbound. \$17.99.

This is an introductory book to help researchers use the Internet to extend family history research. Different genealogy forms are discussed and methods for research are addressed and a variety of Web sites are introduced. There are several hundred examples of Web sites for locating all sorts of record types. "It is a well-written, understandable reference book and self-educating guide to researching genealogy online".

### The Complete Idiot's Guide to Online Genealogy

by Rhonda McClure. Published by Alpha Books. 2000. 398 pages. Index Softbound \$16.95.

This is an excellent book that is entertaining and educational. The author introduces the reader to "techie" terms and then "walks the reader through a variety of genealogy software to consider for data storage". Each chapter is devoted to different areas of online research, from genealogy research basics, then Internet research tools: directories, search engines and metasearch engines. "McClure's description of message boards and how to effectively use them is the best I've seen in book form."

McClure presents some of the best ethnic resources and sources in the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, Italy and others.

(Continued on page 8)

**Book review (Continued)** She also discusses how to create a Web site to put your own family history research on the Web, and also presents copyright and privacy issues very well.

There are also helpful dialog boxes filled with tips for successful research, technical tips and terminology definitions. Mr. Morgan states that "if you start reading the book as a novice and use the advice and techniques you find here, you will be a savvy online researcher by the end of the book."

### **Vital Records On Line**

Want to save yourself the time and money of sending to various government offices to question whether your ancestor was born, married or died in their locality? Or, if you want the actual document and need to know correct addresses or fees, try some of these web sites.

VitalCheck Network (<http://www.vitalcheck.com>)

Vital Records Information (<http://www.vitalrec.com>)

To find records that may have been transcribed or indexes to vital records, you will want to begin your search by visiting the state and county pages of the USGenWeb project: (<http://www.usgenweb.org/>)

Obituaries are one of the major record sources that are transcribed. Many of the USGenWeb pages include obituaries in their pages. There are also a few pages that you will want to check that have been compiling links to different obituary sites:

[http://www.king.igs.net/~bdmlhm/obit\\_links.html](http://www.king.igs.net/~bdmlhm/obit_links.html)) a

really good site with lots of links.

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/7748/obit/obituary.htm>. - obituary links to thousands of publications.

<http://www.familyworkings.com/links/obits.htm>.

Of course, when it is all said and done, there will be times when it is necessary to plan a visit to the Family History Center to order microfilmed vital records, church baptisms and obituary resources. Of course, with the familysearch.com site it is now possible to do some of your searching for the records to order before you get to the center.

From Rhonda R. McClure ([rhondam@sodamail.com](mailto:rhondam@sodamail.com))  
Family Tree Finders [family-tree-finders@gt.sodamail.com](mailto:family-tree-finders@gt.sodamail.com))

For Gravestone art information see:

<http://are.as.wvu.edu/grave.htm>

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