

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. BOX 305
Diablo, CA 94528-8308
President: Virginia Rood
Coord. Editor: Dorothy Baker
Meetings: 10:00 a.m.
3rd Tues. Of the Month
(Except August & December)
Alamo LDS Church
Stone Valley & Smith Rds - Alamo

Vol. XVIII No. 10

MAY 2004

THIS MONTH - May 18, 2004

"Louisiana Family History: People, History & Culture"

Sue Severson will be the speaker at our April Meeting. Her presentation is entitled. -"Louisiana Family History: People, History, & Culture". While people today consider Louisiana a small, inconsequential state; its influence, history, & genealogy have impacted over one-third of the current continental states and beyond. From Cajuns & Creoles to plantations & swamps, Louisiana offers unique culture & insights into the formative years of the United States, and spice to family histories.

Sue grew up in a small community just north of Baton Rouge, where most of her family still resides. Her love of family history was learned early from her father who grew up in the heart of Cajun country, & her mother who cherished her early life in New Orleans. She graduated of Brigham Young University, with a degree in Microbiology. Her current assignment is a Moraga Ward family history consultant, with emphasis on the youth.

APRIL MEETING

"White, Blue, Gray! What color form should I use"

Speaker: Stephen Morse

Reported by Lee Schlenker

Our speaker for the April general meeting was Dr. Stephen Morse, PhD. who has figured out, through many trials and errors, how to work through or navigate the website of Ellis Island and really find his or your immigrant ancestors. In April, 2001 Ellis Island database went online and nobody could get into the website. It was bogged down the first day online. And, if and when you did finally get into the website, It wasn't quite user-friendly. This prompted Dr. Morse to figure out just how to navigate and circumvent the Ellis Island search engine from his own Website in order to find information. This led him To develop forms, with the help of other online Contributors, in order to narrow down the search areas by using parameters in the boxes on his forms which are listed on his own website - www.stevemorse.org. The forms are called

"Searching the Ellis Island Database in One Step" (white form - 2 pages), "Searching the Ellis Island Database in One Step - Jewish Passenger" (blue form - 2 pages), and "Searching the Ellis Island Database in One Step" (short form or gray form). Each form proves to be just a little different from the form. The gray form entitled "the short form" is truly short (1/2 page)! On the white form the "ethnicity" category is extensive plus there is a section of 732 ports listed in the Ellis Island database. On the blue form the "ethnicity" category is even more extensive, but there are no ports listings.

Dr. Morse explained to us that you needed to know the exact spelling of a first or last name, or the ship spelling exactly as it had been picked up when entering it into the Ellis Island database.

- and how would you know that bit of information? He has a list of ships on his website. Therefore he has developed parameters to narrow down your search in the last name and the first name. He told us of his search for his wife's paternal grandfather - Jonas Finer. He had many hours invested in locating the entry of this person - especially when his name was found eventually to be spelled Jonise Foine. It was totally misspelled from inputting names into the Ellis Island database - probably from people not being able to read others handwriting. But by using parameters for each line as listed on his forms the search finally got narrowed down.

This also holds true for the name of the ship on which your ancestor arrived. If the ship's name was the Saint Louis and Ellis Island data input listed it as the Saint Louis but your ancestor listed it as the St. Louis, it may not come up at all. You most definitely have to be creative with the names and that is where these forms can help you out. By listing only the first two letters of a first name and/or a last name and the other pertinent information on these forms you stand a far better chance in finding your ancestor. When listing the year of arrival with the "between" dates - this will give you more "hits" or listings on your ancestor's search to choose from. On each form listed when you fill it out and search then get something new about your ancestor, at the end of the first search you are able to go back to your beginning form without filling it in again, change that parameter which you found in your first search and click "search new format" for a second search. You have changed one item on your original search and are ready to search again without filling out the whole form again. Much more simple!

Most of this writing is hard to imagine, I'm sure. If you are in search of an ancestor arriving at Ellis Island, you really need to go to Dr. Morse's website - www.stevemorse.org. You may need only one of his forms for your search or you may need all of his forms for your search. It depends on how much information you have to input. Just go online and visit Dr. Morse's website and see for yourself all the items he has listed there. His website also includes the 1910 to 1930 census which he was unable to

get to on his visit this time.

In his closing, Dr. Morse brought up the Ellis Island website on his laptop just to see if and how it had changed - it was worse than before, but does refer the viewer to a help screen and that screen just happens to be Dr. Stephen Morse's website - the ULTIMATE COMPLIMENT for him!!

LIBRARY HIGHLIGHT

Danville Branch

of the Contra Costa County Library

The SRVGS Handbook is more than a membership directory of e-mail and phone numbers. Beginning with Page 13 of the Handbook, there is a wealth of information. Besides the list of names and addresses of Area Libraries, there are several pages listing a wide selection of audio tapes available to members every general meeting day, and ten pages listing SRVGS reference books that are housed in the Reference Section of the Danville Public Library, 400 Front Street (925-837-4889). Phone: 925-552-5920 Website: www.geocities.com/dsfho@sbeglobal.net The Library also has most Family Tree Maker CDs and a dedicated computer. For assistance with the CDs, Jack Johnson and Claudia Mortensen are available by phone for advice.

HOW TO REACH THE BOARD MEMBERS

President:

Virginia Rood 937-8659

E-mail: VSRood@aol.com

1st V. P Marilynn Tanner 376-6733

E-mail: jtanner@nothingbut.net.net

2nd V.P. Program:

Bob Venter Pat Denton Pat Levy

454-9919 735-8419 938-3301

3rd V.P. Membership:

Dorothy Humpal 735-3310

E-mail: DLHumpal@aol.com

Recording Secretary: Mary Wright 287-8254

Corresponding Secretary:

Sherri Hedman 275- 8123

Treasurer: Bob Dougherty 556-3302

Parliamentarian: Barbara Dittig 648-9364

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

SRVGS CALENDAR MAY 2004

4 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. The Board Meeting will be held at the home of Barbara and Jack Johnson, 616 Camino Amigo in Danville

6 Thursday - 10:00 a.m. A member Education class will be presented by Bob Dougherty at his home, 11606 Amarillo Court in Dublin. The topic will be about how to begin to Scan photos and documents. A large number of members showed their interest by signing-up for this class at the general meeting.

18 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. General Meeting will be at the LDS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road at Smith Road, in Alamo. From I-680 freeway, take Stone Valley Road east 2 & 1/2 miles.

25 Tuesday - 9:00 am The Library Trip will be to the Napa Valley Genealogical and Biographical Society Library in Napa. Phone: 707-252-2252. It is located at 1701 Menlo Avenue corner of Menlo and California). At this library "The collection covers the entire United States and many foreign countries." They have computers and CDs, microfilm and microfilm readers. To view some of their holdings, you may visit their web site by searching for "Napa Valley Gen. and Bio. Society". Bring a lunch as the library is located in a residential part of town. There is a small visitor's fee for using this library.

Carpools will meet BEHIND Albertson's off Diablo Road in Danville and leave promptly at 9:00 a.m. Maps will be available. Sign-up can be made at our general meeting or call the Library Trip Coordinator, Louise Ford by 5:00 pm the day before the trip to either add or delete your name. Her phone number is (925) 376-4587.

JUNE 2004

1 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. The Board Meeting - the location will be at Frances Lloyd's House, 210 Town and Country Drive in Danville. This will be a joint Board Meeting of the newly elected board members, outgoing board members, supporting SRVGS staff and other members.

15 Tuesday – 10:00 a.m. General Meeting will be held at the LDS Church on Stone Valley Road. The speaker will be Pam Dallas. The topics of this 90 minute presentation will be: PERCI and NUMUC.

22 Tuesday - 8:30 a.m. The Library Trip will be to the California State Library and/or the California State Archives in Sacramento. The Sacramento Genealogical Society has its library collection available in the Archives building.

SRVGS Special Interest Groups **MAY - 2004**

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP - They are scheduled to meet Tuesday, May 18th after the general meeting at about 12:30 p.m.. Bring a bag lunch. This is a genealogy software users group for PC's and will focus on the use of Master Genealogist. Barbara Johnson, will be the contact person for this meeting.. Phone (925)-837-2153 or e-mail bcj616@earthlink.net

GERMAN - A home group meeting is scheduled for Wednesday May 26th (the fourth Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m., at the home of Sue Hanck, 3616 Sugarberry Lane in Walnut Creek. Phone (925) 933-9505 or e-mail jhanck@astound.net. Please let the hostess know if you do not plan to attend or if you need directions.

For other group information, contact Fran Schweitzer (925) 935 -5744 or e-mail FranSchw@pacbell.

Margaret Koenig will host the June meeting.

Members will also be carpooling to Oakland on June 12th to listen to Sabine Scheichert.

IRISH - Their meeting date will be May 12, (second Wednesday) at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Patty Erickson, 10 Ridge Place in Pleasant Hill. Phone (925) 229-0889 or e-mail russpat@comcast.net.

SOUTHERN - This group will not meet in May. They usually meet on the 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 Dorothy Stanton, Phone 820-3757 or email dpstant@hotmail.com.

INTERNET – Interested SRVGS members that are also Internet users communicate via e-mail. The coordinator is Jack Johnson. Phone 837-2153 or e-mail jackmj@earthlink.net.

Member Internet users may join this group by sending an email request. Please use "SRVGS Internet User" as a subject line. John Lemak is a welcome member of this group.

CALENDAR OF OTHER EVENTS

19-22 May, 2004

The National Genealogical Society will hold its annual national conference in Sacramento at the Sacramento Convention Center. www.ngsgenealogy.org

12 June, 2004

Saturday From 8:30 am till 2:30 pm, the California Genealogical Society is sponsoring a German Genealogy Seminar featuring Sabine Schleichert from Munich. The fee for non-members will be \$ 25. Prior to June 1, you may pre-register and order a box lunch for an additional \$ 9. The location will be at Preservation Park off I 980 at 13th Street in Oakland. For further info, visit their web site at www.calgensoc.org, and click on special events.

8-14 August, 2004

The California Genealogical Society is sponsoring a 6 day research tour to the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, IN. For further details and info, visit their web site at www.calgensoc.org.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Coordinator: Dorothy Baker 437-4883
DJBDorothy@cs.com
Calendar Coordinator: Vern Segelke 828-8570
Vmseg3@greaterbaynet.com
Special Contributor: Pat Isom 820-2660
Mailing: Lucy Carver 837-3146
Deadline to put information in the newsletter is the last Thursday of the month. Members are encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter by mail or e-mail.

BOARD/COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2004/2005

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	Sandra Burns
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"Dear Genie"

Genie aka Barbara Dittig

Have you hit that "Brick Wall" and don't know how to get around it???? Ask "Dear Genie" to help you. She can gaze into her *Crystal Ball* and find the answer to your question. It is amazing how she can solve the most difficult problems so easily. Send an email to: BDittig@comcast.net (Subject line) "SRVGS "Genie"

MILITARY RECORDS

If you were to pull out a photo album or a box of old family pictures and go through them one at a time, how long would it be before you encountered a snapshot of a family member in a military uniform? If you are one of the seventy-five percent of Americans who can claim at least one family member who has served in the United States military, it probably wouldn't take long.

Such pictures are a valuable resource for family historians and a tremendous aid in your search for genealogical information. Consider the clues you can uncover from studying a military photograph in your family photo collection. The pictures should identify:

1. The individual.
2. The war in which the individual served.
3. The branch in which your relative served through the uniform he wore.
4. The rank or unit (battalion, division, etc)

It goes without saying that various types of records were created for every individual who served in the United States military. The real concern is learning what and where these records are, and how to use them as a research aid. The basic steps of learning about your military ancestor are:

1. Identify the individual (full legal name).
2. Identify the military branch.
3. Identify the time period.
4. Identify where the records are kept for that time period.
5. Secure the proper request form.
6. Complete and submit the form.

Time Period and War

As with other branches of the federal government, the United States military has kept excellent records of the men and women who have served the country. While these records were never intended to be a source of genealogical information, it is surprising how much information can be gleaned from these records.

It is entirely possible for an individual to have served in the military at any time during the nation's history.

It is generally during war times that most people, usually young men between the ages of eighteen and

thirty, enlisted or were drafted.

Prior to the Revolution, military service was rendered to the state in which the individual was residing. Therefore, records of that service are kept in the state's archives or historical society. Remember also that even after the United States became a country, it is possible that your ancestor served in a state's militia (National Guard), and those records would also be located by state as long as the unit was not called to aid the federal government. This fact underscores the importance of identifying the branch of military in which your ancestor served. A useful general reference book is *U.S. Military Records* by James C. Neagles (1994, Ancestry). This book should be available in most major genealogical research libraries.

Types of Records

Supposing that your ancestor served the federal government, federal military records fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Draft and conscription records
- Enlistment and service records
- Pension records
- National military cemetery records
- Veterans' administration hospital records
- Soldiers' home records
- Lineage society records, i.e., D.A.R.
- Published unit histories
- Veterans' organizations, i.e., V.F.W.
- Military academy records
- Biographies

As a beginning genealogist, it is best to pursue one particular type of record. Service records and pension records tend to be the most accessible and are recommended for the beginner for that reason. As you learn more about your military ancestor, you can pursue other records to fill in the details of his or her service.

Service Records

Service records comprise the bulk of information the government keeps on any soldier. According to the National Archives and Records Administration, such records document enlistment/appointment, duty stations and assignments, training, qualifications, performance, awards and medals, disciplinary actions,

insurance, emergency data, administrative remarks, separation, discharge, retirement, and other personnel actions.

The useful genealogical data you might learn from service records could include the individual's full name, rank, age, physical description, marital status, occupation, city of birth, and place of residence at enlistment

Pension Records

Pension records represent the real fun for military records research because these are the records that provide the most genealogical data, especially if your military ancestor served prior to the twentieth century.

Because there was no Social Security before the 1930s, many American families depended on the pension awarded to deserving veterans. The federal government awarded pensions to officers, disabled veterans, needy veterans, widows/ orphans of veterans, and veterans who served a certain length of time. But to get such a pension, the veteran had to go through a somewhat lengthy application process. The federal government kept a pension file on every applicant.

Pension files contain all the paperwork associated with the application, including any supporting documentation. From these files you might learn some or all of the following: the applicant's name, spouse's name (possibly even a wife's maiden name), rank, military unit, length of enlistment, and residence at time of application. In some cases, additional information is also included, such as documented proof of service (affidavits from officers or others who could attest to the individual's service), discharge papers that had been given to the applicant at the time of separation, and even personal information like date and place of birth, marriage, or death. When a widow applied for a pension in the name of her husband, she was required to submit evidence to prove her marriage; this often included the names of any children living with her at the time. If you are not certain whether your military ancestor received a pension, the federal government has published lists of pensioners at different times in history. These lists give the soldier's name, service

information, age, death date, and even his or her heirs. Such lists are available for the years 1792-95, 1813, 1817, 1818, 1820, 1823, 1828, 1831, 1835, 1840, 1849, 1857, 1883, and 1899. These lists can be found in the U.S. Congressional Serial Set located in federal repository libraries or in the libraries of most major universities. Also, the federal censuses of 1840, 1890, and 1910 list veterans and pensioners. These records are available at most major research libraries.

Service and Pension Files

The preservation of all federal records is the responsibility of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, DC. While military records fall under this category, not all military records are kept in Washington. Some military records are stored in the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) located in St. Louis, Missouri.

As a rule of thumb, military records from the twentieth century can be found at the NPRC, and military records dated before 1900 can be found in the National Archives in Washington, DC.

1. The National Archives does not do research for an individual. When the proper information is supplied, the Archives will provide photocopies of records for a fee.
2. To obtain these photocopies, submit standard NATF Form 80, on which you identify the records you seek. Form 80 can be obtained from:

General Reference Branch (NNRG)
National Archives and Records
Administration
8th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408

Military Personnel Records may only be obtained by the individual, a legal representative of the individual, or a family member with written permission of the individual. If the individual has passed away, a family member can obtain the records by proving relationship to the deceased.

Between 16 million and 18 million army and

air force records held in St. Louis were destroyed by fire in 1973. Alternate sources can be used to reconstruct any destroyed records, but the reconstruction may not be as complete as the original.

To obtain a copy of any records that do exist, the individual or legal representative must submit Standard Form 180, Request Pertaining to Military Records, for non-genealogical requests, and OR NA Form 13043 for genealogical requests. This form is available from the National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel Records) at 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO, 63132.

Terry and Jim Willard PBS series "Ancestors."
9/01/2000 Ancestry Magazine

Helpful Information from Dorothy Stanton

Found this on a Rootsweb NY Mail List. It contains instructions and form for ordering military records at \$3.00 each. NY state library has a new database on line. Here's their blurb:

What you will find here -

Information includes more than 360,000 men who served in New York State Volunteer and the United States Sharpshooter units and the state's three regiments of United States Colored Troops during the Civil War.

What you will not find here

The database does not contain names of men who served in the United States Army (regulars), United States Marine Corps, United States Navy, Veteran Reserve Corps, or New York State Militia (National Guard) units that were temporarily mustered into federal service during the Civil War.

Here is the link for the search engine:

<http://iarchives.nysed.gov/CivilWarWeb/search.jsp>

Danville Family History Center

SRVGS would first like to **THANK Pat Isom** for all her hard work at the FHC and for guiding us in our family searches. We will miss you but know you will not be a stranger.

SRVGS would now like to **WELCOME** the new Director - **Linda Bailey**.

She was born on Alameda Island and has lived in the Bay Area almost all her life. "I don't remember a time when I wasn't interested in collecting family stories and photos. When I was in high school an aunt sent me some pedigree charts and family group sheets, which I copied (mistakes and all) into my records. Then I was stumped. I had no idea how to do any actual research and so the genealogy part of my collections languished while I went to college, married, worked (in biotech) and raised 4 daughters. In 1999, my family and I moved to Alamo where simultaneously I discovered the Danville Family History Center, the free downloadable PAF program, Ron Frye's class on internet genealogy and ... some free time! I was hooked! Most of my research has been on my father's side in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, but I am anxious to start on my maternal lines with the surnames of Merrill, Whiley, Clark and Brown. One line goes back to England in the 1850s but the others stay in America to at least the early 1700s."

"We are hoping to expand to 20 hours per week as soon as we can get some additional staff. We are pretty proud of our little library and the resources that it offers. Everyone is welcome to come by and check out our facilities, use the internet, order microfilms from the Salt Lake Family History library, or just swap research stories. Also, if you have a few extra hours each week we are always looking for additional staff to help out. Harry Baggett, Jack Johnson and Barbara Johnson, all from the SRVGS, have just joined as volunteers and really appreciate their contribution. Please come by."

Linda Bailey, Director

Danville Family History Center
2949 Stone Valley Road, Alamo

Phone: 925-552-5920 Website:

<http://www.geocities.com/dsfho@sbeglobal.net>

Currently, Hours at the Danville FHC are:

Monday 10:00am - 4:00pm

Tuesday 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Wednesday 10:00am - 1:00pm

Thursday 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Memorial Day



These did not pass in selfishness; they died for all mankind;
They died to build a better world for all who stay behind;
And we who hold their memory dear, and bring them flowers today,
Should consecrate ourselves once more to live and die as they.



They were defenders of the faith and guardians of the truth;
That you and I might live and love, they gladly gave their youth;
And we who set this day apart to honor them who sleep
Should pledge ourselves to hold the faith they gave their lives to keep.



If tears are all we shed for them, then they have died in vain;
If flowers are all we bring them, forgotten they remain;
If by their courage we ourselves to courage are not led,
Then needlessly these graves have closed above our heroes dead.



To symbolize our love with flowers is not enough to do;
We must be brave as they were brave, and true as they were true.
They died to build a better world, and we who mourn today
Should consecrate ourselves once more to live and die as they.

by Edgar A. Guest

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

FIRST CLASS