

ISSN 0736-802X

# *The Livermore Roots Tracer*



*Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society*

P.O. Box 901, Livermore, California 94551-0901

<http://l-ags.org> & <http://facebook.com/Livermore.Amador.Genealogical.Society/>

## Membership Report

### Patrons

Anonymous, Lois Barber, Susan Davis, Richard and Wanda Finn, Dick and Jean Lerche, Doris Matthews, Tom and Natasha Mathews, Duncan Tanner and Shirley Terry

### Benefactors

Kristina Ahuja, Denise Barr, Matthew Berry, Ken Bredlau, Annette Breingan, Vicky Cunniffe, Linda Driver and Walt Crawford, and Peggy Weber

### L-AGS Members

96 active memberships and 110 members

## Meeting News –

### General Meetings —

**Monday November 13, 7:00 p.m., On Zoom.** Mary Kircher Roddy, Flying Under the Radar—Discovering Charles Olin’s Atlas

Monday, December 11 TBA

Monday, January 8, 2024 TBA

**Let’s Talk AND Write Genealogy** — When: Sundays at 3:00 p.m. REMOTE via Zoom resuming in June. Chair: Debbie Mascot. Contact [talkgenealogy.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:talkgenealogy.chair@L-AGS.org)

**The Master Genealogist Group** — Due to Covid-19 meetings via Zoom on the 2nd Friday and 4th Saturday of the month, from 9 a.m. to 12

noon. The Friday meeting is because the Roots User Group in Virginia meets on the 2nd Saturday. TV-TMG Forum Topic: Reports and Problem Assistance; Location: Contact TV-TMG Chair (Duncan Tanner) <mailto:tvmtg.chair@L-AGS.org>

**Pleasanton Genealogy Center** — is jointly supported by L-AGS, the Friends of the Pleasanton Library, and the Pleasanton Public Library. A L-AGS genealogy docent will be available by appointment from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Avenue Pleasanton, California, request a mutually agreeable appointment via e-mail: [docents.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:docents.chair@L-AGS.org)

## L-AGS Leadership for 2023

President*	<a href="mailto:president@L-AGS.org">president@L-AGS.org</a>	Julie Liu
First VP & Program Chair*	<a href="mailto:program@L-AGS.org">program@L-AGS.org</a>	Tom Mathews
Second VP & Membership Chair*	<a href="mailto:membership@L-AGS.org">membership@L-AGS.org</a>	Denise Barr
	<a href="mailto:info@L-AGS.org">info@L-AGS.org</a>	
Corresponding Secretary*		Vacant
Recording Secretary*		Susan Davis
Business Manager*	<a href="mailto:business.manager@L-AGS.org">business.manager@L-AGS.org</a>	Duncan Tanner
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Queries Manager	<a href="mailto:queries@L-AGS.org">queries@L-AGS.org</a>	Richard Finn
Roots Tracer Editor	<a href="mailto:roostracer.chair@L-AGS.org">roostracer.chair@L-AGS.org</a>	Patrick Lofft

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## President's Message

Roots Tracer March 2023

I have always tried to join some of the smaller local genealogy groups in the areas that I am researching. Some of these groups are more obviously beneficial than others. One of the groups I joined is a Phelps County Nebraska genealogy group. Their yearly membership is a very reasonable at \$10.00 a year. I liked their newsletter. It always included interesting background on the lives of the original European settlers of the area, which gave me a deeper understanding of what life was like for the early settlers. This month I felt like I hit a goldmine. The library for the area just added online newspapers for the area from 1893-1952. These newspapers were not available on newspapers.com so I would have probably had to travel to the area to find this. So I am going to be looking at more of the small towns that I am researching to see what other surprises the small town genealogy groups may have.

Some of our groups will be resuming. One of them is the Let's Chat group. Debbie Mascot will be resuming it in March. The meeting will be held at the Livermore Library but Debbie can not reserve the room sooner than 7 days in advance. If there are a lot of Livermore residents requesting rooms then Debbie may not get the prized reservation date. If you are interested in being on the Let's Chat/ Write group, you need to email Debbie and RSVP to [talkgenealogy.chair@l-ags.org](mailto:talkgenealogy.chair@l-ags.org).

It seems that the L-AGS board has lost one of our members, Marilyn Glass, who has served as our Corresponding Secretary for several years. She picked up our mail twice a month, delivered checks to Duncan and sent out acknowledgements to our monthly speakers. We will miss Marilyn and wish her the very best in her move to be closer to the grandchildren. If you would like to join our L-AGS board, we would love to add you to our group. You can contact me, Julie Liu [president@L-AGS.com](mailto:president@L-AGS.com)

This Genealogy group does not happen by itself or in a vacuum, we need the participation of members for our volunteer organization to work.

*Julie Liu, President*

L-AGS annual membership dues are due and payable now

Please complete the form at

<http://www.l-ags.org/application.html>.

*Dues may now be paid either via PayPal or postal mail.*

### **The Livermore Roots Tracer**

*The Roots Tracer* is the quarterly publication of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. The mission statement of the Roots Tracer is: **“Instruct. Inspire. Inform.”**

We encourage members to submit articles for publication. Material can be e-mailed to: [rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org) or mailed to L-AGS, P.O. Box 901, Livermore, CA 94551-0901. Want ghostwriting help? Just ask!

### **The Roots Tracer Staff**

**Editor**—Patrick Lofft

**Contributors**

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**Composer**—Andi Winters

**Printing and Distribution** -

Sue Davis, Jean Lerche

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

by Shirley Siems Terry, founding member and 1<sup>st</sup> President.

By the 1970's and 1980's, we used cassette recorders for oral history interviews. Today there are small digital recorders in addition to our handy cell phone. I had made cassette recordings of my Mother, Grandmother, several cousins and aunts, and an uncle plus a few cousins shared recordings of other relatives including my Great Grandma Day that had originally been recorded on a reel to reel machine in the 1950's. I was able to digitize all of them using a cassette to digital recorder I bought for about \$35.



*Cassette to Digital Recorder*

Oral history stems from the tradition of passing important family information from one generation to another. It is a technique for preserving the voices, memories and perspectives of people in sound or video and later in transcript. The interviewer should ask for personal recollections of events in which they participated or took part. Before starting, agree with your subject how the information will be used. Explain they can choose which questions to answer and that the recorder can be paused at any time. Always begin by stating your name, the date and the place of the interview and their name and where they presently live.

If you plan to do such an interview, use a digital recorder or your cell phone. (For stability, a cell phone needs to be on a tripod.) Pick a quiet, softly lit, comfortable place for the two of you where you won't be interrupted by other family members, pets, traffic noise, etc. Cell phones should be turned off. Be sure you each have a glass of water. Having a third person makes it harder to keep on topic and can be confusing when transcribing. If anyone does chime in,

quietly identify them and move on.

Be prepared with a list of open-ended questions on specific topics. Allow up to two hours for your interview but plan a break at an hour. Any longer will be too tiring. It's better to do several different interviews. I was surprised to get through a whole page of handwritten questions in 30 minutes so do some homework and be prepared.

The list of questions should be specific to each individual. As genealogists, we sometimes know more about the person's ancestors than they do. If not, help them fill out a pedigree chart and several family group sheets prior to your session. These charts and multiple marriages, which are common these days, seem to confuse the issue for some. Use the data to ask for memories of the individuals and locations. Always ask for family stories or legends and if their family is artistic or musical. We forget that before radio and television, families often entertained themselves and guests by playing instruments, singing or reading poetry. My cousins didn't know that our grandmother could play the piano until she visited her great-granddaughter's house and sat down at the piano and played several songs. The family might have preferred visiting, but Grandma had the time of her life pounding out "The Little Brown Jug."

Inquire about childhood memories, education, special friends, courtship, marriage, and children, dates and reasons for family moves, special travel experiences, hobbies and talents, favorite sports and other leisure activities. Ask the how and why of family occupations. What are some historical or weather events they remember? Ask retirees how their lives have changed. Don't end the session without asking if they want to add anything else. Be sure you have their date and place of birth and full name as well as any changes of name. We often forget about nicknames. Keep options open to return for an additional interview.

For more detailed questionnaires, go to <https://siarchives.si.edu/history/how-do-oral-history> by the Smithsonian Institution Archives.

So now that you're gathering information on others, have you written up your own biographical information. Maybe you need to write or record your own answers to the above questions.

## Wills Can Be the Source of Information About Ancestral Families

By Gene R. Block

Over 40 years ago when I started doing genealogy, I knew very little about my family's background other than what my maternal grandmother told me from time to time when I was growing up. So, like most who are new to doing genealogy, and since I knew all four of my grandparents, I started by trying to identify my ancestors beginning with my great-grandparents and proceeding back in time. What were their names, when and where were they born, and how long did they live? I also tried to determine why they came to America from Europe. Over the years I have identified more than 100 individuals to add to my family tree. Gradually I became interested in trying to discover information about their lives, but how could I do that?

I started by going to libraries that had old newspapers on microfilm, and later to courthouses to try to find more information about my ancestors' lives. I was told to search local history books written about the areas where my ancestors had lived. But that didn't work out very well as only once have I discovered an ancestor listed in a local history book.

When newspapers became key word searchable some years ago, I discovered a number of incidences in the lives of some ancestors that were newsworthy enough to make their local newspapers. This is when I realized that some of the stories my grandmother told me had been "sanitized" in a number of incidences. Additionally, these newspaper articles, while very interesting, generally did not provide much information about my ancestor's lives. They only provided information about a specific event at a specific point in time.

Gradually I discovered several other sources that helped fill in some of the gaps of some of my ancestor's lives. When several ancestors died suddenly, Police Reports and Coroner's Reports were helpful in filling in some of the details. I have also discovered that wills can sometimes be an excellent source of information about the lives and family dynamics of our ancestors.

Recently I discovered online the will of one set of my paternal 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandparents, Selig and Regine Rosenthal, who lived in Gleicherweisen<sup>1</sup>,

### Lineages - Rosenthal-Block

Selig Rosenthal b. about 1783-1784 Germany d. Gliescherweisen, Römhild, Thuringia 30 July 1861 m. Regine Rosenbaum b. Schonungen, Schweinfurt, Bavaria about 1793 d. Gliescherweisen, Römhild, Thuringia 12 July 1870
Henrietta Rosenthal b. Gliescherweisen, Römhild, Thuringia 26 Mar. 1818 d. St. Louis, Missouri 25 July 1891 m. Albany, New York 25 Nov. 1839 Barney Hysinger b. Oberlauringen, Lower Franconia, Bavaria 24 Aug. 1819
Jenny Hysinger b. Albany, New York 1 Jan. 1845 d. St. Louis, Missouri 11 June 1882 m. St. Louis, Missouri 8 June 1862 Louis Block b. Bouzonville, Moselle, France 21 Nov. 1825
Henry Block b. St. Louis, Missouri 1 Sept. 1877 d. St. Louis, Missouri 11 April 1960 m. St. Louis, Missouri 31 Dec. 1903 Ida Ruffle b. St. Louis, Missouri 28 Nov. 1880
Raymond Block b. St. Louis, Missouri 12 Nov. 1912 d. Chesterfield, St. Louis, Missouri 25 Sept. 2007 m. St. Louis, Missouri 17 June 1936 Janice Stanze b. St. Louis, Missouri 25 May 1912
Gene Block, author of article, living

<sup>1</sup>Gleicherwiesen in Thuringia is a part of the town Römhild. First mentioned in 1100 under the name Glychon, in 1182 Glychon an der Wysen (today Gleicherwiesen) and Glychon am Berg (today Gleichamberg) are referenced. Over much of history, the village was under control of von Bibra family (c.1356 - 1850). Much of the manor house still exists. The village received the right to hold a market in 1743 and commerce flourished. Before World War I, about one third of the population was Jewish. A Jewish cemetery is outside of town. The church, which stands somewhat in the middle of the village, was built onto the tower in 1843.

Germany. One of their four daughters was Henrietta Hysinger, one of my paternal great-great-grandmothers. The will was dated May 2, 1860, and gives a real insight into their family dynamics. The will was written in German. I used Google to translate the text into English.

At the time the will was written the couple had eight living children. Right at the beginning of the document the couple state the reason they prepared the will. It was “to prevent any disputes that could arise about our future estate and its distribution among our 8 children after our mutual deaths”. They also indicated that they entered into the will “by the fact that 3 of our children have been living and residing in America for a long time, to whom we paid more than their inheritance when they immigrated”. The will went on to mention that they paid for the education of one son to become a teacher, “a lot of money and more than his share of the inheritance”.

There was also a married son named Hermann who “was also equipped by us” and “that he was not happy in his commercial business”. He “not only received a lot of cash support from the commercial business operated by us, the same in 1855 has a remaining guarantee of more than 300 guilders and only again this year to support his oppressive and poor situation, he has received more {sic} 100 guilders from us”.

The will goes on to state that “our three youngest unmarried children “have not yet received anything from us,” and that the money the couple has paid to their five married children have “as everyone knows” caused the couple “to end up in poor financial circumstances”. It was only after the “two youngest sons, Abraham and David, were able to actively take on our business did our circumstances improve”. The improvement was supported by “the frugal domestic management of our daughter Charlotte”. Without this help from our three youngest children, we would not have “escaped the complete ruin of our financial situation” and that “all the assets we now possess, we owe solely to our three youngest children”, and “only have these three of our youngest children to thank for the fact they can still receive something from our estate after our death”. The will then goes on to state concerning their three youngest children that since “we at our age, cannot do so ourselves, need to be a burden to them”, and it is their duty as parents that we show our gratitude towards our three youngest children and not only put them on an equal footing

with our other five children who are already equipped and supported; but still give them a special preference in our will and all the more so “because they alone have fed, maintained and cared for us up to now in our old age”. Later in the will the couple again mention the care they have received from their three youngest children and the fact that the children have promised the couple the same kind of care “until their death”.

On the fifth and last page of the will the couple state that if any of the children for any reason are not satisfied with the will and the inheritance portion allotted to them, but want to fight the provisions of the will, than that child is to receive “only the legally required portion of our assets and that everything that the same has already received from us beforehand must be taken into account and that our three children, Abraham, David, and Charlotte Rosenthal should be entitled to everything they have done for us and to deduct their many years of efforts and services,” “before the calculations of the compulsory portion begins”.

Since discovering this will online recently, I have reread it several times. It is apparent that the couple was sincerely concerned that they were being taken care of by their three youngest children and that these three youngest children had not received any money from the couples’ estate. At the same time their older married siblings had received money, in some cases a lot of money, from the couple and were not helping support them in any way. The couple decided to use the will to try and even things out as much as possible. But the couple was also concerned that one or more of the older children might challenge their will as the several sentences on the last page of the will describes the consequences if the will is challenged by any child.

Several years ago, I learned from a distant relative who was also related to Selig and his wife that before her death Regine had been blind for many years. Selig knew that his wife needed daily help, and as he was more than 10 years older than his wife, he wanted to ensure his wife would receive the help she needed if he were to pass away before her. Since none of the five older children were either, not willing to help because of where they lived, or because their own financial situations made it impossible to help their parents, Selig realized they were totally dependent on their three youngest children to

provide the care he and his wife needed. The couple was using the will to try and compensate the three youngest children as best they could for their help and support.

This will provides a fascinating glimpse into the family life of one set of my ancestors' lives at a point in time later in their lives. They realized they needed help and wanted to compensate their three youngest children who were providing the help they needed.

While I have not discovered to date if anyone has done a follow up of this situation, it would be fascinating to discover such a document. Did any of the five older children challenge the will? What was the relationship of the siblings who took care of their parents with the siblings who for one reason or another did not contribute to their parent's support? I would love to find out

what eventually happened to Hermann, the child who was described in the will as "living in oppressive and poor circumstances". And how did the descendants of the three daughters who immigrated to America fare over time compared with the descendants of their siblings who stayed in Germany? There is probably a lot more to this story of the children of Selig and Regine that, at this point in time, I have not yet been able to discover. Unfortunately, I may never be able to discover how this family situation played out.

Selig passed away on July 30, 1861, fifteen months after the will was prepared. He was 78 years old at the time of his death. His wife, Regine, lived for another 9½ years after the will was prepared. She died on October 12, 1870, in Gleicherwiesen. She was 77 years old when she passed away.

## How I Located the Documentation of John Sites' Land Acquisitions at Coalgate, Oklahoma (Indian Territory)

By Ileen Peterson

As I sorted boxes of letters and various documents we brought home after my mother-in-law passed away, I found much information about individuals from the 1910's and onwards. Some original legal documents were really special and I would never have known how to ask for them.

My husband's great-grandparents immigrated from Russia (now Alvit, (Latvia<sup>1</sup>) Lithuania<sup>2</sup>) in 1889.

John Sites [Jasaitis] first worked in coal mines in Pennsylvania to support his brothers' moves to the United States. Apparently the immediate family moved to Coalgate,<sup>3</sup> Indian Territory around 1904 and began paying for a lot in town, I had

<sup>1</sup>Latvia–Lithuania relations are bilateral international relations between Latvia and Lithuania. Latvia has an embassy in Vilnius, and Lithuania has an embassy in Riga. The two states share 588 kilometers (365 mi) of common border. Both countries are full members of the European Union and NATO.

<sup>2</sup>Lithuania, officially the Republic of Lithuania, is a country in the Baltic region of Europe. It is one of three Baltic states and lies on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania shares land borders with Latvia to the north, Belarus to the east and south, Poland to the south, and Russia to the southwest.

<sup>3</sup>Coalgate was founded in 1889 as a coal mining camp named Liddle in Atoka County, a territorial-era county in the Pushmataha District of the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory.

Receipt Account of Town Lot Payments.  
All remittances should be made to U. S. Indian Agent, accompanied by statements in duplicate.

REFER IN REPLY TO  
No. 3277 B

**Department of the Interior.**  
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE

OFFICE OF UNITED STATES INDIAN AGENT  
INDIAN AGENT  
MUSKOGEE, INDIAN TERRITORY.  
September 23, 1907

John Sites,  
Coalgate, I. T.

I acknowledge receipt of your remittance  
of \$ 8.00, the same being final payment on  
lot 5-6, block 220  
lot, block  
lot, block  
lot, block  
in the town of Coalgate, Indian Territory, as  
per statement accompanying remittance.

Very respectfully,  
*John A. Nelson*  
U. S. Indian Agent.

JV  
W. R. - Size 6-28-07

*John Jasaitis, Final Land Payment Department of the Interior Sept 23, 1907*

always thought that coal miners had to live in company housing, but John Sites made payments to<sup>4</sup>: Department of the Interior, Office of United States Indian Agent, Muskogee Indian Territory, from 1904 to 1909.

Receipts and patents then were marked as from the Department of the Interior, Oklahoma beginning February 1908.

The family had always told me that John Sites was naturalized in Pennsylvania, but the only record I have found so far is a Declaration of Intention signed in the State of Oklahoma, Coal County, March 7, 1908, shortly after The Department of the Interior sent John Sites the Patent conveying his title to the property he bought<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>Coalgate is a city in and the county seat of Coal County, Oklahoma, United States. The population was 1,967 at the 2010 census.

<sup>5</sup>COALGATE, Originally known as Liddle and located in the Pushmataha District of the Choctaw Nation, Coalgate, the county seat of Coal County, is situated at the intersection of U.S. Highway 75 and State Highway 31. The town began as a coal-mining camp in 1889.



## Sites Family Lineage

John Jasaitis<sup>1</sup>  
 b. circa 15 Apr 1858 Kovna<sup>2</sup> (Kaunas) Gubernia, Russian Empire  
 d. 21 Nov 1929 in Henryetta, Okmulgee, Oklahoma  
 m. Agatha Stefonowicz  
 b. circa 1865-1866  
 d. circa 1910-1920

William Stanley Sites  
 b. 13 Oct 1890<sup>3</sup> Pittston, Luzerne, Pennsylvania  
 d. 9 Jan 1951 Henryetta, Okmulgee, Oklahoma  
 m. 27 Nov 1913  
 Elizabeth Belle Dupire  
 b. 17 Nov 1897 Oklahoma  
 d. 24 Feb 1987 Henryetta, Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Frank John Sites  
 b. 28 Mar 1920 Coalgate, Coal, Oklahoma  
 d. 12 Jul 1980 Fullerton, Orange, California  
 m. 10 Jul 1942 Oklahoma  
 Dorothy Dean Agnes Parker  
 b. 8 Apr 1923 Heavener, LeFlore, Oklahoma  
 d. 2 Feb 2009 Fullerton, Orange, California

Michael Jon Sites  
 b. 25 June 1943 Denison, Grayson, Texas  
 d. 20 May 2012 Seattle, King, Washington  
 m. 15 Nov 1975 Stanford, Santa Clara, California  
 Ileen Peterson, living

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> John Jasaitis and Agatha Stefonowicz migrated to the United States in 1888.

<sup>2</sup> The Kovna gubernia (also known as Kaunas) was formed 18 December 1842 by Tsar Nicholas I from seven western uyezdi (districts) of the Vilna gubernia. The Kovna gubernia consisted of those seven uyezdi. Currently, most of the former Kovna gubernia is now located in Lithuania with a small part in Latvia and Belarus.

<sup>3</sup> Per SSN application, Birth Certificate is unavailable, maybe 5 Oct 1892 agrees with 1920 census. Between 1893 and 1905 Pennsylvania counties began recording births within their jurisdiction.

## Renew Your Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society (L-AGS) Membership for 2024

Soon it will be time to renew your membership for 2024 and hopefully for decades more. Keep an eye on your L-AGS emails (or postal mail if we don't have your email address) for the renewal notice in early October 2023. The email or letter will provide all the details and procedures to easily renew your membership for 2024.

Starting in 2024 the L-AGS dues will be revised as follows;

"Household" memberships (combined Individual and family) are \$25 for one or two people living at a single address. They receive an electronic copy of the Roots Tracer.

"Household\_Roots\_Tracer\_Mailed" members are \$30 and receive a mailed copy of the Roots Tracer.

Benefactor(\$40.00) & Patron(\$100.00) are not changed. These memberships can select mailed Roots Tracer at no additional cost.

Besides continuing to offer the Roots Tracer, L-AGS looks forward to sharing a new year of programs, discussions, articles, indexes, with you as we continue to collect and preserve genealogical records and educate through publications and programs for our members.

If you have any questions regarding membership, email Denise Barr at [membership@L-AGS.org](mailto:membership@L-AGS.org).



## You Just Can't Steal Waitresses' Tips

By Debbie Conner Mascot

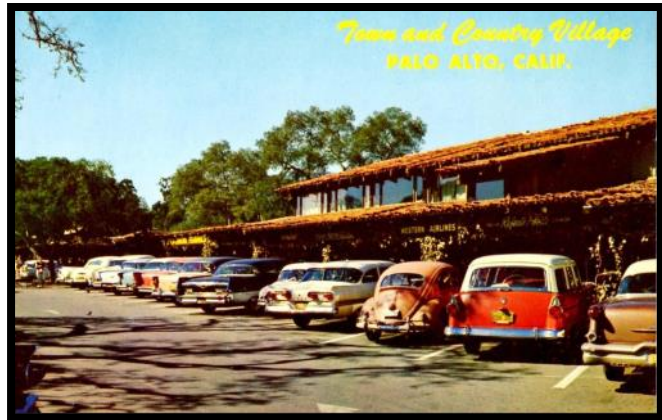
I very clearly remember the last time I ate there. It was after my grandfather's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. I went driving around with my cousins and aunts and uncles and we stopped at Stickney's. I remember sliding into the faux leather booth and admiring that they were still as good as new. No worse for the wear after all these years.

It wasn't a Lyon's or Denny's... it was different - older and more "vintage". I barely remember the décor other than the maroon booths, but I remember the cakes and pies as you entered. And the waitresses that I think had worked there since it opened in 1953. As a child, I remember eating there as much as at any other restaurant. I don't remember any particular times but I know I always ordered a burger or the chicken soup. The burgers were delicious, large and predictable. The barbecue sauce was super smoky and tangy (more sweet than anything) and the chicken soup had thick, doughy noodles that made it more like a wet casserole than a soup. And the cakes and pies... oh dear lord the cakes and pies.

Sometimes a memory sneaks up on you as you write about something. I remember eating there with Diane before finding my wedding dress at Nordstrom. I sat on the burgundy bench annoyed and bemoaning the hideous sights of horrible dresses we'd been presented with all day. I didn't know at the time that after enjoying the usual delicious and gigantic burger, Nordstrom would give me my future bride attire and so all my whining was for nothing. I also ate a huge slice of lemon meringue pie, without worrying about which hip it would settle into for the long haul. AH! the joys of being in your 20s.

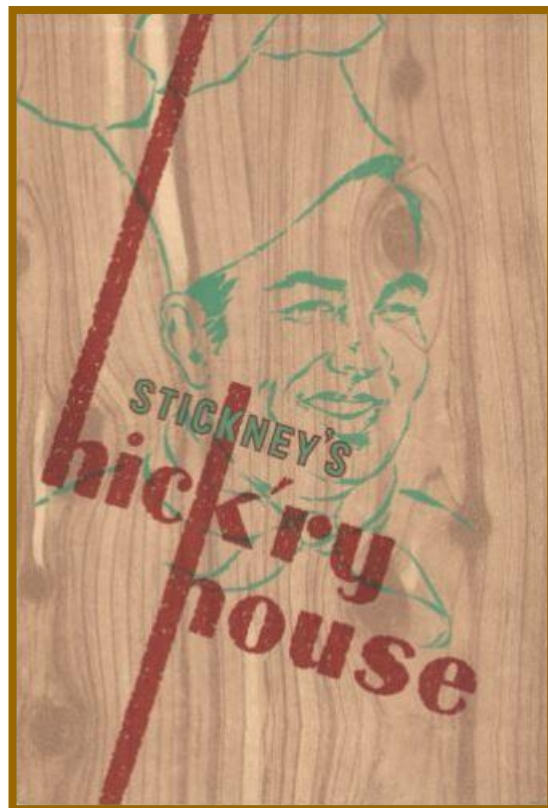
The history of Stickney's is one that goes back to a year before the opening at Town & Country. Adrian "Red" Stickney and his wife, Kay, opened Hick'ry House on El Camino Real in Redwood City in 1952. A year later, Stickney's was the first tenant in the new Town & Country Village in Palo Alto. Soon there were six Stickney Hick'ry Houses from San Mateo to San Jose, California. The only one not on El Camino Real was in Valley Fair, San Jose.

El Camino Real, for those who are not from the Peninsula of the San Francisco Bay, was called



*Town and Country Village, Palo Alto, California*

the King's Highway. It was the only way to travel between San Francisco and San Jose back in the day. Along this highway in the years after Red opened the restaurants, his face could be seen on billboards and on the restaurant signs lining



*1950s STICKNEY'S HICK'RY HOUSE  
Restaurant Menu*



*Stickney's Match book cover*

“Restaurant Row,” the strip of El Camino in Southern Palo Alto, where travelers would need to “fill up.” It was also just barely over a mile and a half from Stanford University, thereby allowing alcohol to be served. Here is where you’d find the old Palo Alto staples—Rickey’s Studio Inn, Rick’s Swiss Chalet, Dinah’s Shack, Ming’s, Villa Lafayette, Rudolpho’s, and drive-ins such as John Barnes Drive-In, the Carousel and Bonander’s.

Stickney’s also was known for their support of Stanford University’s athletes. Chuck Taylor, Stanford coach (yes, the Chuck Taylor of shoe fame), was a close friend of Mr. Stickney. Mr. Stickney had been a great athlete, but had to quit when he had to go to work for himself. He had a big heart for athletes, often employing them so that they could work for meals and extra cash. He sponsored a number of scholarships and Little League teams, as well.

But the best thing ever about that Town & Country Stickney’s was that it was where my dad had his first job. For one whole day. He was about 15 or so and he was hired as a bus boy at the recommendation by a friend, who already worked there. If I had been better prepared, I would have found the friend’s name before writing this, but I’m not sure I ever wrote it down.

Dad was learning the ropes and his friend said, “Harry! Follow me!” Dad followed him to the men’s room and the kid poured his apron on the sink top and a bunch of money came tumbling out. “Look! I got all their tips!” Just then, Red walked in and caught them. He fired them both on the spot.

“You just can’t steal the waitresses’ tips and expect them to not notice!”

Dad told that story every time we ate there and I relished it each time. I relish it again now as I write this and hear this story in his voice.

## Free Genealogy Web Sites

[www.L-AGS.org](http://www.L-AGS.org) - Homepage of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. Online search lists of local cemeteries, census, obituary, mortuary and pre-1905 death records. Index to the large Schellens Papers collection of newspaper clippings. Contains links to many other Internet sites of genealogical interest.

[www.sfgenealogy.com](http://www.sfgenealogy.com) - Homepage of San Francisco Genealogy, a vast collection of genealogical databases related to San Francisco. Includes birth, death and marriage lists, various directories, voter lists and much more. Also has links to numerous other web sites of genealogical interest.

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) - Homepage of the Family History Library (LDS). This site offers search lists of millions of transcribed records from around the world and of submitted family trees, as well as indexes to the US 1880 census and the 1881 census of the UK and Canada. The site also offers a catalogue of millions of available microfilms and much, much more. The site may ask you to sign in with a user name and password.

[www.usgenweb.com](http://www.usgenweb.com) - Homepage of the USGenWeb Project. This site, organized by State and County, is the result of efforts by volunteer transcribers throughout the country. The data offered varies by location dependent on the availability of

*Continue on Page 11*

# Homesteading in Oberlin, Kansas

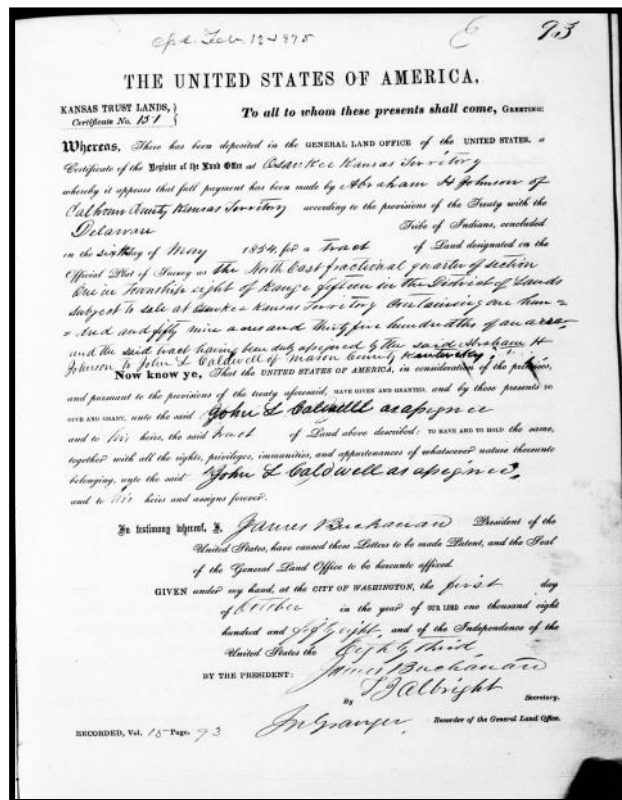
By Caye Johnson

Homesteading was the topic of the June 2023 meeting of the Livermore-Amador Genealogy Society Meeting. As I was always a little suspicious of the Johnson family history of my husband's father Aaron Johnson going to Oberlin, Kansas at age 20 with his older friend, Hannah Nylund, to homestead land there, I researched the United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books<sup>1</sup>.

The family story is almost accurate.

The original homestead was by Aaron's father Abraham B. Johnson on May 4, 1887 and cancelled on October 28, 1887 and relinquished to Hannah Nylund on the same date. Aaron and Hannah were married six months later on April 15, 1888 in Oberlin. Aaron built a chicken house and a barn of sod. Their pioneer life continued for a little over two years and their first son Alexander Christopher was born in their sod house on February 20, 1890. Because of continued crop failures and grasshoppers, Aaron and Hannah became discouraged, and in late August 1890, they moved back to Scandia, Kansas. At this point, according to the Land Management Tract Books, Hannah cancelled her homestead and relinquished it on Sept 19, 1891 to her brother-in-law Louis Johnson who was now 21 and eligible for the Homestead Act.

<sup>1</sup>Tract Books are used by BLM Eastern State Offices as the basic index for public land title research. Tract Books are simply listings of all the transactions involving surveyed public lands — by State or territory, meridian, township range, section and subdivisions. Today there are 1,582 original General Land Office tract Public Domain lands passed from the United States — in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio and Wisconsin.



Kansas Trust Lands Certificate; General Land Office <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/>

Aaron and Hannah remained in Scandia to raise their large family of eight children, but Abraham B. Johnson moved to Oberlin, Decatur, Kansas with his wife and other children and had a very successful career there. At his death, he owned many properties in the area. But the question remains: Why did he relinquish his homestead to Hannah Nylund? Did he want to homestead another 160 acres but couldn't because he already had a homestead?

## Free Genealogy Sites

Continued from page 10

both the data and volunteer help. Some locations have very large collections, others small.

[www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com) - Homepage of Cyndi's List with about 308,000 links to genealogy sites the world over. These are categorized by location, by type, by religion and by many other designations. If there is a site out there that might have information.

[www.ellisland.org](http://www.ellisland.org) - Homepage the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation. Allows searching for New York passenger arrival records during the period 1892-1924. If you find someone, in most cases you may also display the original ship's manifest and/or a photo of the ship they arrived on. The site may ask you to sign in with a user name and password. Make these up and remember them for future use. There is no charge.

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## The Pan-Am Experience

Posted by Debbie Conner Mascot, on Tuesday, July 28, 2015

I was thumbing through a magazine recently and came across a short article titled, "The Pan Am Experience." Next to it was a picture of what appeared to be the internal organs of a glamorous 1970s passenger airplane, complete with smiling flight attendants dressed to the nines. From the gist of the headline, I gathered that it was an advertisement to eat how you did on Pan Am in the 1970s.

For only \$295 (\$355 if you want the fancier upper dining deck) you can board a replica Pan Am 747 and never actually go anywhere. At the check-in desk, instead of getting strip-searched and herded like cattle, you get a '70s boarding pass complete with ticket jacket and carry-on tags. Using your boarding pass, you now have a chance to enjoy the lounge without having to sign up for the airlines' outrageously heavy interest Mastercard program. In the lounge, with drink in hand, you can visit the authentic Pan Am "memorabilia".

Now, when I was growing up, my father was a graveyard airline mechanic for Pan-Am at San Francisco Airport. Without implicating my family in the demise and eventual bankruptcy of Pan-Am, I believe it's okay to mention that at one time or another we lived on much of the Pan Am memorabilia that you will see in your Clipper Club lounge. Our coats and luggage all featured the logo, having been "borrowed" from the airline. My childhood art masterpieces were done on the Pan Am computer punch cards of the 1970s. Many of our food items, including the Chateaubriand<sup>1</sup> served on special family occasions, were "leftovers" from Pan Am. Just seeing the logo for me is like many of you might feel seeing the wallpaper that adorned your childhood home. But back to the tour.

<sup>1</sup>A chateaubriand is a filet mignon roast, simply put. Chateaubriand is also the most decadent, tender beef roast and is perfect for special occasions and holidays. This roast-sized filet mignon is designed to impress with mild, delicate beef flavor and incredible tenderness.

After you peruse the items of my childhood, you will board the Air Hollywood replica of Pan Am's first Boeing 747. Having not actually experienced



*Chateaubriand, filet mignon roast*

the Air Hollywood version, I can only imagine that you get to board this without the person behind you crashing your heels with his luggage or the woman in front of you taking the last spot in the overhead compartment while yelling into her cell phone.

Once boarded, your Stewardess (not flight attendant) will be wearing the original tightly fitted uniform and you will be offered another cocktail while soothing music fills the cabin of the fake airplane. While they perform a safety demonstration, you get to sit back in comfortable, roomy seats, rather than being shoe-horned into the spot between the smelly bible salesman and the extremely large woman who may or may not be a circus performer. Rather than having peanut packets thrown at you, you are served a gourmet four-course meal on fancy China (that may or may not have been used with the Chateaubriand during my special family dinners). And instead of having plastic cups thrown at you with 6 precise cubes of ice and four exact fingers of cola, you are served your choice of beverage in crystal glasses that may or may not have been my childhood everyday glasses.

During his decade at Pan Am, my father made

lifelong friends. It wasn't until Dad's funeral that I learned that some of these friends had only worked with him for a couple of months before moving on from Pan Am, but they never moved on from one another. There are many stories I cannot share that I learned about Dad during the after-funeral party, and most also featured Pan Am in some way or another. Maybe. I'm not implicating anyone.

Pan Am was a pioneer airline, in both its early routes through continents and in its fostering of a family-like atmosphere for the employees. The Kelly Act of 1925 authorized government mail contracts to private carriers. As a result, many aircraft owners began air carrier services, including Pan American World Airways in 1927, when it won a contract to deliver mail to and from Cuba and the United States. By 1930, it expanded to include mail between Mexico and Latin America and the United States. At this same time, air carriers were forced to carry passengers not just cargo to remain competitive. In 1939, Pan Am was the first United States passenger service to Europe and then provided military transport to Europe, Africa, and Asia. By the middle of the 1970s, Pan Am had become one of the world's largest air carriers. Deregulation, recession, turmoil in world politics, airline airfare wars, and high gas prices, caused Pan Am to lose ground in the mid-1980s.

With their fleet aging and no money to purchase new aircraft, Pan Am was spending too much money on keeping their flights in the air-- over \$800 an hour for maintenance costs for every hour an aircraft was in flight. I'm pretty sure my family didn't borrow enough items to contribute to much of that \$800 an hour, but just in case, we GAVE IT ALL BACK. That is what I will say if I'm ever asked. WE GAVE IT ALL BACK. Even the Chateaubriand.

It also should be well noted here that my mechanic father was not earning a cent of this \$800 an hour per aircraft, as he was no longer working at Pan Am. He was in the lay-off program of years before. But if he had been among the mechanics left, he would have used his Macgyver-like skills to use spit, glue, and duct tape to keep those planes in the air for far less than \$800 per hour. We should all be thankful for that lay-off.

Pan Am filed for bankruptcy in 1991 and, while they tried to reopen in 1997, they had to shut their doors once again when they couldn't pay their creditors.

While they may not have been the best of business people, I will forever be grateful to Pan Am for my "uncles," for my winter-wear, and for giving this poor child from a poor family the taste of Chateaubriand, which I found at the time tastes best with just a hint of catsup.

**Your** family history is important!  
Share it publicly and with your family through  
**The Livermore Roots Tracer**

*The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society's Quarterly publication.*

Editor Patrick Lofft is willing and able to help you format your information to share with others. Contact Patrick at [PMLOfft@comcast.net](mailto:PMLOfft@comcast.net)

***A Reminder:***

**L-AGS annual membership dues are due each December,  
payable starting on October 1**

## Finding Genealogy Gold in Local Records

By Pat Northam

We all have at least one ancestor who seems elusive to our research efforts in discovering the details of their life and death. One of my elusive ancestors is my great-grandmother, Mary Carstulovich Vitaich (aka Marietta, Marrietta), a native of Austria, what is today Croatia. Finding her death certificate and substantiating the circumstances under which she died has been challenging. According to family sources, Mary died on 20 February 1890 while giving birth to her daughter, Mamie. This article identifies the local sources I used to discover what really happened to my great-grandmother.

### Record of Deaths, 1889-1894

While researching the Alameda County, Record of Deaths, Volume C, 1889-1894 (LDS Film 1376380), I discovered Mary Vitaich died on 20 February 1890. She was 31 years, 7 months, and 5 days old, calculating her birthdate at about 15 July 1858. The cause of her death was ovarian cancer. Her death and age were confirmed for me. I also searched the Record of Deaths for her daughter, Mamie. Her death was listed as 25 July 1890, calculating her birth at about 5 January 1890. This refutes the family lore of Mary's dying on the same day as Mamie's birth.

### Register of Interments

Checking to see what was new on the SFGenealogy.com website, I was pleasantly surprised to discover a Register of Interments for Mount Calvary <http://tinyurl.com/m9tdttv>. I searched the register and found a listing for Mary Vitaich. She was buried in the Slavonic plot of Mount Calvary Cemetery in San Francisco.

The cost of burial was listed as \$8. I had previously discovered that her remains were



*Special marker dedicated to Catholics moved from Mt. Calvary Cemetery in San Francisco*

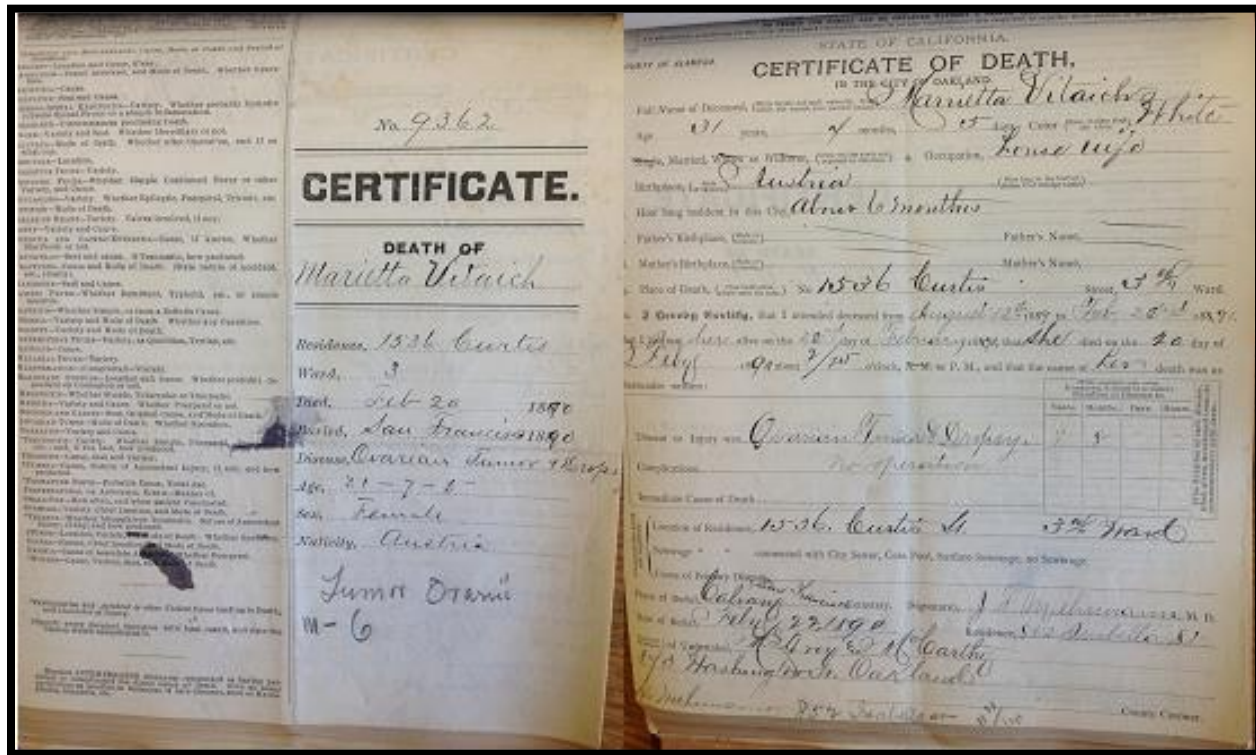
transferred to Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in the 1940s with those of her husband John (and presumably her children, Johnny and Mamie). Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery was established in 1887 on 300 acres of a former potato farm in Colma. Mary is buried in Section V with a special memorial marker inscribed as follows: "Interred here are the remains of 39,307 Catholics moved from Mt. Calvary Cemetery in 1940 and 1941 by order of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Rest in God's Loving Care."

During a long lunch break from Superior Court jury duty in Oakland, I visited the Oakland History Room at the Oakland Public Library on 14th Street. It is located just two blocks north of the courthouse. I had recently discovered that the Oakland History Room Collections <http://tinyurl.com/ks9phfg> included birth and death certificates for 1870-1904.

Imagine my excitement as the librarian handed me an old weathered book of birth and death certificates, originals no less! She discussed how to use the book and gave me permission to photograph the images. Buried in the book was my great-grandmother's original death certificate. As I skimmed the 125-year-old death certificate absorbing all the details, I was surprised to learn that the family was living in Oakland at the time of Mary's death. Her residence listed an Oakland address, one that was not familiar. I thought the family was living in Livermore, having moved

REGISTER OF INTERMENTS.									
NAME	BAPTIST	Method	Engl.	OCCUPATION	RESIDENCE	PARISH	GRADE OF BURIAL		
Vitaich M				Wife of John	Colma - 17th St & 18th St				
MOUNT CALVARY CEMETERY.									
DATE	AGE	ENTERED BY	INITIAL	PLAT	PAID	PURCHASER	PURCHASED	PREP.	REMARKS
20 Feb 1890	31 yrs 7 mos 5 days	W. H. S.				J. Carstulovich Vitaich			46513

*Mary Vitaich's interment as listed in the Register of Interments for Mount Calvary.*



Marrietta Vitaich's original death certificate discovered at Oakland Public Library

from San Francisco. I also learned that Mary had been under a doctor's care for about six months. The cause of her death was due to ovarian tumor and dropsy, no operation. Mary had been dealing with the disease for more than seven years. As I finished reading her death certificate, I felt content knowing what really happened to my great-grandmother and the circumstances surrounding her death.

**The Next Chapter**

Mary left behind six living children. Her widowed husband and children moved to Livermore in late 1890, presumably to live

close to his sister, Anna and brother-in-law, Peter Catanich. Stay tuned for the next chapter of my family's history.

*Pat Northam enjoys the challenge of staying on top of local collections of records. She previously served as First Vice President & Program Chair of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society. Pat can be contacted at [pnortham@sonic.net](mailto:pnortham@sonic.net).*

*This article was original published in the May 2014 issue of the Roots Tracer.*

**Free Genealogy Sites**  
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[www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org) - Homepage of Stephen P. Morse's many helpful web pages, far too numerous to list. Try the Ellis Island Gold Form to search for passengers by partial names, names that sound like it or by where they came from.

[www.glorerecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov) - Homepage of the US Bureau of Land Management. If an ancestor received a land patent (homestead) from the federal government, you may be able to find a digital image of the original document on this site.

[www.itd.nps.gov/cwss](http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss) - Homepage of the National Park Service Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System. If you believe your ancestors served in either the Union or Confederate Army, you should be able to find them here. Other information on the site includes histories of Union and Confederate regiments, links to descriptions of significant battles, and selected lists of prisoner-of-war records and cemetery records, which will be amended over time.

## *Future General Meetings - via Zoom*

Zoom is a web-based video conferencing tool.

Join the L-AGS Zoom meeting through a L-AGS email invite.

First time Zoom participants Learn How with YouTube.com:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>

Visitors are always welcome.

Monday November 13, 7:00 p.m. - via **Zoom** - site opens 6:30 p.m.

*Mary Kircher Roddy    Flying Under the Radar - Discovering Charles Olin's Alias*

Monday December 11, 7:00 p.m. - via **Zoom** - site opens 6:30 p.m.

*To Be Announced                      To Be Announced*

Monday January 8, 7:00 p.m. - via **Zoom** - site opens 6:30 p.m.

*To Be Announced                      To Be Announced*

*The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3)(public charity) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Taxation Code 2301g.*

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