

The Livermore Roots Tracer



Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society

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

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

Membership News

Welcome New Members

Rosemary Gallegos, Bud Tuohy, Yvonne Steuben,
Ann Ciolino, Mary Johnson, Christine Smith, Ron Gross

Thanks to the generosity of the following L-AGS members:

Patrons

Anonymous, Dick & Jean Lerche, Madelon Palma, Kay Speaks, Duncan Tanner

Benefactors

Kristina Ahuja, Marilyn A. Cutting, Linda Driver & Walt Crawford,
Gail Fairfield, Richard & Wanda Finn, Jim and Ray Ann Kenyon, Cindy McKenna,
Patricia Moore, Ileen J. Peterson, Peggy Weber

Total L-AGS Members as of May 27, 2015: 149 Memberships and 181 Members

Meeting News

General meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton.

L-AGS Leadership for 2015

President	president@L-AGS.org	Patrick M. Lofft
First Vice President & Program Chair	program@L-AGS.org	Marilyn Glass/ Diane Wiedel
Second Vice President & Membership Chair	membership@L-AGS.org	Thomas Mathews
Business Manager	business@L-AGS.org	Duncan Tanner
Corresponding Secretary		Nancy Southwick
Recording Secretary		Leora Frise

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A Message from our President

Dear Members,

As a longtime docent, I have heard many reasons why family historians have not made progress on their research. Here are a few of the ones I hear most often:

“I can’t get there from here.”

“The research location is too far away.”

“The cost of travel is so expensive, with lodging, meals, gas, etc.”

“My family wants to go on a real vacation, not traipsing behind me in cemeteries.”

“The records are overseas.”

“I can’t get around as easy as I used to.”

Even if you cannot travel, you can still make progress on your research by conducting long distance research. Here are a few steps you can take while doing your own family history research from a distance. Identify several individuals or families you want to research, and then choose one individual or family. Review the information you already have about them and decide what you want to learn. With one individual or family in mind, you can then identify questions you want answered.

Next, identify the types of records you will need to answer your questions. Use the Internet to locate vital records repositories, archives of religious denominations, genealogical and historical societies, and public and private libraries, etc. Review their list of holdings and logistical data. You will want the facility’s hours of operation, telephone and FAX numbers, postal address, email address, research services and fees.

Write out what you want to request or ask. Then, go ahead and make contact. If you contact the record facility by telephone, be sure and ask who will be helping you with your request. Ask them to spell their name, obtain their telephone number and email address. If you send a letter, email, or fax, make sure you address your request to correct office and person. If you are required to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope, be realistic about the size of envelope you send.

Ask up front if there are any charges. Do not assume that you are getting free research services. If you do not ask, do not be surprised if you receive your material plus an invoice for copying, etc. A basic fee may provide a specific number of copies – anything more will cost extra. If there is no charge involved, consider donating to the organization that helped you. A donation to the organization for their continuing genealogical research work may enhance your ability to receive excellent service and help others in the future. Make a check out to the organization, not the person helping you.

Do not overwhelm the researcher. Review their website for details regarding the number of lookups they will do and the charges for each. Provide a reasonable number of items you want the researcher to locate for you.

Be patient, but do not wait forever to get a response back from the research organization. Research requests can get lost on an employee’s desk. Envelopes and letters can fail to show up in the mail. Your timing may be “bad” with a large number of requests arriving on the same day. Your request may be at the bottom of the pile. As local genealogical and historical groups generally have part-time (or volunteer) support, their mail may not be checked every day.

It is important to understand that your researcher may change from one request to the next. Most people handling research requests usually have other responsibilities. Reference librarians normally help library customers, answer phone inquiries, and assist Internet users. Your genealogical research request is what they do in between all those tasks. Following these simple steps can help you make progress on your family history.

P.S. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Vol. 35, No. 1, February 2015 is a skipped issue.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Lofft

From the Editor's Desk

By Teresa Costa Fraser



When we stretch ourselves, we look back and realize that it is our challenges that make us stronger, wiser, and better. In what areas of genealogy are you going to stretch yourself this year?

Now, let's talk about what you can expect to read in this issue.

In his president's message, Patrick Lofft details *how* you can still make progress on your research by conducting long distance research.

Gene Block has been tracing his family's history for nearly forty years. In this issue's feature article, he explains how we can make our ancestors come alive using information from old newspaper articles, court records, and coroner reports.

Leora Frise submitted a fascinating first person account of the last Hindenburg flight. Be sure and read "Irene Hansen's Hindenburg Memories."

Jane Southwick recently found an original inquisition with affidavits describing the accidental death of the young son of her great-great-grandparents. Read all about the Josefa Hiquera Livermore Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution annual research trip to the Salt Lake City Family History Library.

Are you compiling your summertime reading list? If so, be sure and read Patrick Lofft's detailed re-

view of *The Lost Ancestor: A Genealogical Crime Mystery*. You may want to add it to your list.

Lois Barber agreed to let us republish her timely article, "Decoration Day as it Used to Be."

George Anderson reminds us that all issues of the *Livermore Roots Tracer* are online making it possible to reread articles. In this issue he reviews David Abrahams' article, "On Visiting Mother's Birth Place."

In the Member Happenings and Events column, Leora Frise also shares a recent discovery relating to her article, "Lois Virginia Wenger: Rosie the Riveter," in the August 2014 issue of the *Livermore Roots Tracer*. Dick Finn shares the surprising discovery of several gravestone rubbings completed in the 1960's at the Oak Knoll Cemetery in Livermore. Joy Cohn and Tom Mathews had no idea they were cousins. Read what they discovered at a recent L-AGS Board Meeting.

G.R.O.W. columnists Susan Johnston and Kay Speaks challenge you to explore new search engines and websites. In this issue, they take you on a "slow-paced genealogy treasure hunt."

Thanks to everyone who submitted articles, member updates, and columns. If you have any questions about submitting articles contact me at terifraser.sanfrancisco@gmail.com. Keep 'em coming.

Teresa Costa Fraser, Editor

Livermore Roots Tracer

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

Members are encouraged to submit articles for publication. Email articles to: rootstracer.chair@L-AGS.org or mail articles to L-AGS, P.O. Box 901, Livermore, CA 94551-0901.

Livermore Roots Tracer Staff

Editor.....Teresa Costa Fraser
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 G.R.O.W. Column.....
Susan G. Johnston and Kay Speaks

How to Make Your Ancestors Come Alive

By Gene R. Block

Recently, I watched a television interview of a well-known author and historian who specializes in writing bibliographies. She was asked what made her so successful as a writer and why her books and articles were so popular. She answered that her secret was to make her subjects “come alive.” She said she did this by thoroughly researching her subjects and including interesting events in her books and articles that took place in their lives and that were not well known.

As I listened to the interview, it occurred to me that this should be our goal too as we trace our family’s history and write up our findings. Because if all we record about our ancestors is their vital information such as when and where they were born and when and where they died, most readers would not find that very interesting. If we include some unusual highlights and anecdotes of their lives, it will make their stories much more interesting and will make the people we are writing about *come alive*.

I am not suggesting that we can find interesting aspects about all of our ancestor’s lives. Like everyone who traces their family’s history, I have some family members who have lived in the not too distant past that I have not even been able to discover when and where they were born and when and where they died. Sometimes it seems that they were delivered here on earth by a space ship, and at the end of their lives, the space ship returned to pick them up and take them away without leaving a trace. It would not surprise me to learn that a large percentage of people who believe in UFO’s are frustrated genealogists.

I have been tracing my family’s history for nearly forty years. To date, I have only been able to locate pictures of four of my eight great-grandparents. If during all of this time I still have not been able to find pictures of my four remaining great-grandparents, how can I possibly expect to discover interesting aspects of their personal lives? It turns out that there are several sources, other than family sources, that have the potential to provide this information. One source is old newspaper articles.

Old Newspaper Articles

There is an expression that most people have *15 minutes of fame* in their lifetime. That may not be true for everyone. But if one of your ancestors was involved in a newsworthy event or events during their lifetime, it probably would have been reported in the newspapers at the time the event occurred. It also may well have been documented again in their local newspaper at the time of their death.

Today, many old newspapers are digitized and key word searchable by surname. It is easier than ever to find interesting events in

our ancestor’s lives. Several examples below illustrate this point.

Leo Kipping’s Brush with Death

My great-grandfather, Leo Kipping held many different jobs during his lifetime. In 1908, he owned a tavern in St. Louis or a “saloon” as they were called in those days. One afternoon a young man entered the saloon and asked to purchase a glass of beer. My great-grandfather looked at the young man and did not think that he was old enough to legally purchase an alcoholic drink. He



1908 St. Louis Post-Dispatch newspaper headline of newsworthy event author discovered about his great-grandfather, Leo Kipping.

refused to serve him. An argument ensued with the young man leaving without having been served the beer he had ordered.

Shortly afterwards he returned with a pistol and pointed it at my great grandfather. Leo's oldest daughter, my grandmother's sister Belle, was working as a waitress in the saloon. When she saw the young man point the pistol at her father and threaten to shoot him, Belle jumped between her father and the young man and began screaming. The young man did not want to shoot Belle and when neighbors arrived after hearing Belle's screams, he fled.

At this point several neighbors chased the gunman and helped the police arrest him. According to the newspaper article I found of the incident, the gunman was 21 years old which meant he could legally purchase a drink. But the paper reported he looked to be no older than 17 years old. My mother never passed this story on to me about her grandfather Leo. It could be she forgot about it, or perhaps she never knew the story.

Henry Oldeg's 15 Minutes of Fame

I discovered another interesting event in an old newspaper involving one of my wife's great-grandfathers. At the time of the 1900 census, Henry Oldeg was a retired blacksmith living in south St. Louis. In the census column labeled occupation it showed "own income." I did not understand what this meant as he had immigrated to this country from Germany as a young man and had little money. In reading the article, I learned that Oldeg had invested his money in real estate and was renting out the houses he owned.

The article appeared in the *St Louis Republic* newspaper shortly before Christmas in December 1900. Apparently, Oldeg had rented out a large house he owned to a lady named Mrs. Walton. Not only was Mrs. Walton behind in paying the rent, but she was running what the paper described as a "children's home." She had moved 33 young children into the house. Oldeg obtained a court order to have Mrs. Walton evicted from the house for non-payment of rent. This incident made for an interesting human-interest story about these 33 waifs who were about to be put out on the street, in the cold right before Christmas.



1900 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* headline of article author discovered about his wife's great-grandfather, Henry Oldeg.

Immediately after the initial article appeared, a campaign was begun to raise money to pay the back rent owed by Mrs. Walton. In one day enough money was raised to pay all the back rent she owed, with money left over. Those who contributed money had their names published in the newspaper, some for contributing as little as 25 cents. It is not known how long Mrs. Walton was able to continue running her children's home at this location.

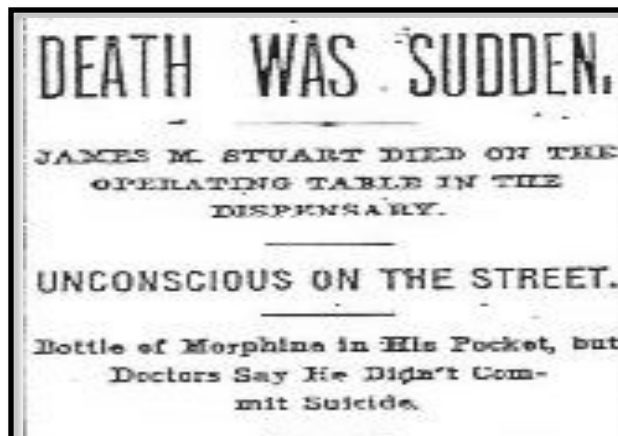
Oleg's 15 minutes of fame occurred because the 33 waifs' plight was made public. His renter was behind on her rental payments just before Christmas and happened to be running a children's home, which housed the 33 young waifs.

Interestingly, the articles I found which reported this matter were not critical of Oldeg for obtaining a court order to have Mrs. Walton removed from the property. The articles simply reported that the rent was past due and appealed to the generosity of the readers to donate money so the children would not be evicted during the holiday season in the middle of the winter.

The Secret Life of James M. Stuart

I also discovered several articles about the untimely death of my great-great-grandfather, James M. Stuart, who was born in Scotland and died on a street corner in downtown St. Louis, in February 1898. One article published at the time of his death stated that he had been "wealthy at one time," but "was ruined by litigation." Another article stated that at the time of his death he only had 25 cents in

his pocket and that “was the only money” he possessed on earth. The article also stated that he “had the inventive genius of the Scotch” and that he had “patented a trap used in connection with boilers of stationary engines.” After reading this, I assumed he lost his money through litigation and had received a patent. Both statements I later discovered were false.



February 1898 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* headline of article discovered about the life and untimely death of the author's great-great-grandfather, James M. Stuart.

Court Records

Several years after I found the articles in the newspapers at the time of Stuart's death, I was in St. Louis doing research at the St. Louis County Library. I entered his name into a database of digitized and key word searchable newspaper articles from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, from 1874-1922.

One of the articles I found referred to a court case in which Stuart had been a defendant. With this information in hand, I went to the office of the Secretary of State in downtown St. Louis. There, the staff was able to locate the case file. Included in the file was nearly forty legal size pages of the answers Stuart gave to questions posed to him while he was on the witness stand during the trial. It turned out that he did not lose his money as a result of the litigation. He testified that his business had failed and he was insolvent



before the court case even started. In fact, he countersued his former business partner for causing the business to fail and won and was awarded \$750 by the jury. He also revealed in his answers that he had not received a patent as stated in the newspaper at the time of his death. Rather, he had purchased a one half interest in a patent after it had been issued. This helped explain why I was not able to find a patent issued to him when I was searching records in the U.S. Patent Office.

One of the articles at the time of Stuart's death stated that he had traveled to California during the Gold Rush in 1849. This proved to be correct. I searched for him in a San Francisco newspaper from this time that had been digitized and was searchable by surname. I discovered that while in California he had married a young woman who subsequently divorced him. No one to the best of my knowledge in his family knew of his marriage and divorce. It was stated in one of the articles at the time of his death that even his most intimate friends “knew virtually nothing about his life's secrets.” It occurred to me that he had possibly abandoned his wife in California and this was why he was so secretive about his past. I probably will never find out if this is true as the San Francisco Courthouse and all records were destroyed in the great earthquake and fire of 1906.

Coroner's Reports

Anyone whose ancestor died unexpectedly or of a violent death has another source of personal information about their ancestor. These are coroner's reports which are prepared after someone dies who was not under the care of a physician immediately prior to their death.

Frank Stanza's Gambling Mishap

My maternal great-grandfather, Frank Stanza collapsed and died at his office in 1913. The local coroner's office conducted an autopsy. I have not been able to locate a photograph of my great grandfather, so I don't know what he looked like. However after reviewing the autopsy the Coroner conducted immediately after he died, I know he was 5 foot 6 inches in height, weighed approximately 250 pounds, had grey hair and grey eyes. I also know about several prominent scars he had on his body. I know the cause of his death and from the police report attached to the Coroner's

file I even know what items were in his pocket at the time of his death and what his co-workers reported his last words were before he died.

GROCER STANZE'S MISHAP.

He Tries to Escape From a Poker Raid and Breaks a Leg.

An exciting raid was made by the police last night on a gambling den. It was on Bill Kerrick's poker-room over Koerner's restaurant, 320 Washington avenue. As a result of the raid Frank Stanze, an eminently respectable merchant in the northern part of the city, who was captured in the place, broke his leg. The entrance to Kerrick's place is through No. 617 St. Charles street, and at 5 o'clock last evening Detectives Moberly and Kelly and Patrolmen Creagan, Hammett, Cavanaugh, Dandon and Fenton quietly slipped up-stairs to the place. The door was locked, but there was a broken window, which Moberly raised and climbed through. Then he unlocked the door from the inside and let the other officers in. There were two games of cards going on. At one table draw poker was being played by five men, while at the other a half dozen men were seated playing some other game of cards which they alleged was merely a friendly game of hearts. The men who were playing at the poker table had their chips cashed, but the others presented no chips and the officers had no evidence that they were playing for money. Three other men were watching the game. The whole crowd was bagged and Moberly leaving them in charge of the other officers started for the nearest patrol box to summon the wagon. While he was gone Stanze made a sudden rush for the large dumb waiter, which connects with Koerner's saloon and restaurant below, got into the place and jumped down. The poker-room is on the second floor and Koerner's saloon and restaurant on the first floor. There was a rope by which Stanze might have let himself down, but in his haste he jumped the distance. He had taken the leap before the officers could divine his purpose. The result was most disastrous to Stanze. He tore the knee cap off one of his legs and was unable to get up from where he fell. All possible attention was rendered him at the time and after giving bond he was sent home in an ambulance. This morning Kerrick stated that the man's leg was broken and he would be laid up for some time. Stanze keeps a grocery at No. 828 North Market street and was of course unable to be in court when his case was called this morning. As usual the men gave bogus names at the police station. Their cases were settled in Judge Cady's court this morning by six of them paying costs and nolle prosequis being entered in the other eight cases.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 13 February, 1889, pg. 5.

ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

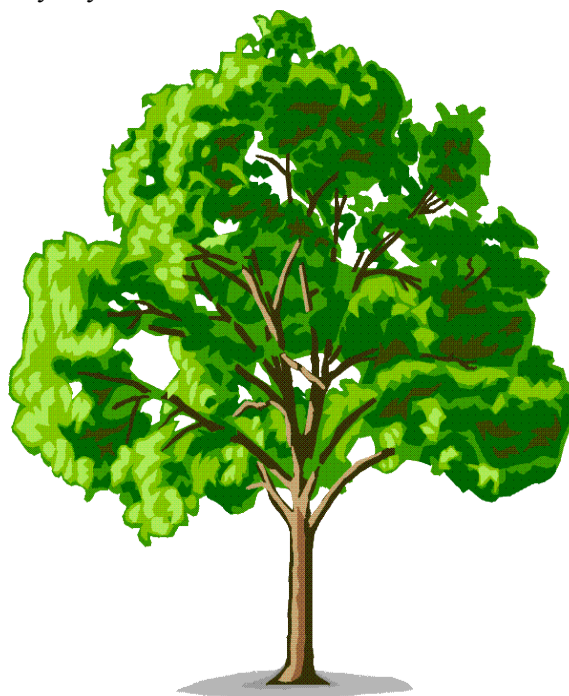
This information combined with the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* newspaper article from 1889 which described an incident when he broke his leg trying to avoid being arrested by the police after he was caught gambling in an illegal card club, makes my write up of this ancestor much more interesting than it would have been if I had only included his vital information.

Conclusion

These events, all of which took place more than 100 years ago, show that our ancestors were *real people* and offers interesting glimpses into their personal lives. None of the examples listed above were passed down as family stories.

By including this type of information in the write ups I do for each ancestor, I hope to achieve my goal to make my ancestors *come alive* for the readers. Discovering this type of information is what makes genealogy so interesting for me. As more old newspapers and other records are digitized, I am hopeful I can find other interesting events that took place in the lives of our ancestors.

Who knows, someday I may get lucky and find at least one picture of one of my four great-grandparents whose pictures I have not yet been able to locate. That would really make my day!



Irene Hansen's Hindenburg Memories

Submitted by Leora Frise

Irene Hansen passed away on February 2, 2015. She was 89 and my daughter-in-law, Margaret's maternal grandmother. About 10 years ago she wrote this story for me in her own words. It's her memory of seeing the German airship the LZ 129 Hindenburg just minutes before it crashed on May 6, 1937. —Leora Frise

It was a warm sunny day on [Staten Island], so I decided to sit on the lower three steps that led up to our apartment which was above a small grocery store. I was about 12 years old at the time.

In a short while I heard a strange humming like sound that grew louder. As I looked to the direction of it getting ever louder, I looked up to see a huge dirigible looming over the two houses across the way (Maine Avenue). I stood up feeling amazed when I realized the sight and size of it. Especially being so low that people were leaning out the side window openings and waving at myself and surely others in the area that must have come out to see what was making such that strange noise.

I saw the huge letters on the side of it HINDENBURG, having heard mention of it on the radio and my father being born in the free city of Danzig, then a part of Germany (it is now known as Gdansk) he mentioned it, hearing about it on the news.

In my excitement I ran upstairs to share such a sight with my parents. We went on the small porch to watch it go past and out of sight. I decided to sit out my expiration on the sofa for a little while. My father as usual was listening to the news, when suddenly an extraordinary voice came on the program crying and trying, but unable to control himself at

what it was he was witnessing (at the air base). Lakehurst is just a short distance from Staten Island. It was just that short period of time that the Hindenburg missed the landing connection and crashed in flames.

As I remember, there were relatives, photographers, cameramen and I'm sure some dignitaries waiting to greet all the passenger and crewmembers, etc., which have created a permanent record of this horrible event.

On a trip to the movies we got to see it on the newsreel. I can remember the silence in the theater. For days later and maybe even longer all I could think about was of all those gaily waving people not knowing those were the last moments of their lives.



Hindenburg over the skyscrapers of Manhattan in New York City. Courtesy of Airships.net : A Dirigible and Zeppelin History Site, www.airships.net/hindenburg/disaster.

Annual Research Trip to the Family History Library

By Jane Southwick

Members of the Josefa Hiquera Livermore Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and their guests made their annual research trip to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah in January.

Each individual had a different agenda while there. Some found more patriots to add to their DAR membership. Another person finally connected a son to the correct father. One person was finding and making copies of original records to add to her database for future generations.

I found an original inquisition with affidavits of six people describing an accidental death of an eight year old son of my great-great-grandparents. This record also showed the exact address in the city of New York which is hard to find in 1853.

There are many advantages for doing research at the Family History Library. The main one is the availability of the books, which can be read, printed, or scanned to a flash drive. There are even machines that will scan a whole book. These books are being digitized at a rapid rate, but there are still many books to work with.

Also, the numerous computers offer free access to some of the paid websites with docents (missionaries) to help. The microfilms on the second floor allow you to select many at a time for reading at a microfilm reader. This is much faster than ordering one or two films at a time through the local Mormon Family History Center.

Our Chapter Regent visited the Joseph Smith building with her cousin and discovered a genealogy area in the back of the lobby. She said there are rows and rows of computer workstations. There is a children's area where kids can have fun dressing up in costume, coloring, a learning area or they can play with some of the antique replica toys.

There is a free photo area where you can have your picture taken as though you are a new arrival to America around the turn of the century. After



The picture below shows the group sitting on the stairs on the first floor of the Library.

the photo is taken, you add your email address and the photo is sent to you.

Some of the members experienced the joy of listening to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir practice on a Thursday night. If you are fortunate enough to be there on a Sunday morning, you can attend the service and hear the full program.

All in all, the group enjoyed each other's company while doing their individual research and sharing "hallelujah" moments, and sometimes dining together with a little partying going on.

The Lost Ancestor: A Genealogical Crime Mystery

By Patrick Lofft

Author, Nathan Dylan Goodwin, was born and raised in Hastings, East Sussex. Schooled in the town, he then completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Radio, Film and Television, followed by a Master of Arts Degree in Creative Writing at Canterbury Christ Church University. He has completed a number of successful local history books about Hastings. His other interests include reading, writing, photography, genealogy and travelling.

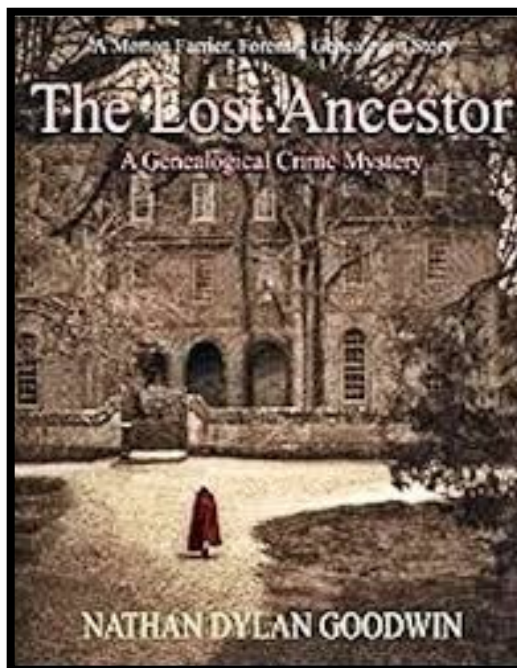
The author asked me to review this book and not having read any genealogical mystery novel before I was eager to see what the book would be like. Genealogy books usually are one of two categories, either how-to or historical fiction.

The protagonist, Morton Farrier, is a forensic genealogist, age 39, living with his fiancée, Juliette. Morton's client in 2014 is Ray Mercer, an elderly gentleman with end stage cancer who has searched the genealogical records in vain for his lost ancestor, Mary Mercer. In 1911, Mary has an elder sister, Caroline and a 17 year old twin Edie (Edith). The Mercers lived in a small stone cottage in Winchelsea on the Sussex coast. Both twins are considered for a third housemaid position at Blackfriars.

The tale provides interesting descriptions of the hierarchy and tasks assigned to domestics, Mary and Edie, during Edwardian times. Of course, a novel concerning young people includes the expected references to consensual hanky-panky in the garden followed by mild morning sickness.

The book is very well written. The first third of the tale is relatively standard genealogical research practices with frequent references to Ancestry.com and many other on-line databases which made me wonder; where is the criminal activity.

Genealogist Morton is, correctly, obsessed with tracking every person even remotely connected to Mary Mercer, her relatives, her work associates and all of their descendants. He diligently seeks three sources to document every event. The internet has changed how we do genealogy research these days but it is good to see that Morton not only uses the internet but still visits archives and libraries and even does some old fashioned foot walking around the areas he is researching



But then Douglas Catt entered the novel! Author Goodwin expertly leaves the reader hanging at the close of most chapters as the tale skillfully uses flashbacks between the events of 1911 and the present day. The story lines are believable but not so obvious that I solved the mystery before Morton. The writer uses affable UK idiom. e.g. “an A3 manila envelope,” or “have a quick lie down,” etc. but not favourite in place of favorite.

One aspect of the book which irked me was that Goodwin employed his artistic license to permit a scoundrel entry to a dwelling during the night for the purpose of surreptitiously installing eavesdropping software on a mobile phone. Whose mobile is never less than a yard from his or her person?

Disclosure: Author, Nathan Dylan Goodwin, sent me a copy of this book to review. The reviewed copy will soon be available for circulation at the Pleasanton Public Library. This would be a perfect gift idea for those who love mysteries and genealogy. You can purchase this book through Amazon, Target and other sites in paper-back or Kindle versions *approx. \$11 to 12.*

Decoration Day as It Used to Be

By Lois Barber

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Livermore Roots Tracer, Volume 25, Issue #1, February 2005. Did you know that Memorial Day was originally Decoration Day? Travel back in time with Lois as she explains how Decoration Day used to be.]

Decoration Day, a day to remember those who have died in our nation's service, was officially proclaimed on May 5, 1868 and celebrated on the 30th. In 1967, the name was changed to Memorial Day, honoring soldiers who had died in other wars. In 1971 Memorial Day was declared a national holiday to be held on the last Monday in May to ensure a three day weekend for federal holidays. Several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead.

In the area where I grew up, people seemed to think that Decoration Day was for honoring any and all dead and not just those fallen in service to our country. When I was a youngster my family always made a big thing about Decoration Day. A couple of days before the 30th, my mother gathered lilacs, peonies, and iris from the flowerbeds. She might even go to the woods for some ferns and anything else growing there that she could use. We would make up generous bouquets and go to the two cemeteries where we had ancestors buried. Other members of the family might also have left a remembrance.

When we went to the Bear Creek Cemetery located on the hill outside La Farge, Wisconsin, my mother would always tell us the story of her father. Whenever he and my mother would go to town with the horses and a buggy, the cemetery was about half way and a good place to let the horses rest. Grandpa would go to the gravesite of his parents, take out his jackknife and poke in the grass until he found a stone. They did not have a headstone but a fieldstone had been placed at each corner of their lot. Because the cemetery was on a hillside the soil kept sloughing



My great-great-grandparents, Joseph O'Bannon Parker and Pamela Madison Clark, and their gravesite near La Farge, Wisconsin.

down hill and covering over the stones. After many years the grandchildren of this couple purchased a headstone to mark their graves.

On Decoration Day our town would have a little parade; the band and a few veterans would march to the bandstand. There would be some prayers, a speech or two, and then we would drive by the cemetery and congratulate ourselves on how nice

it looked.

My mother says that her in-laws never went back to their family's graves and they thought that she was unusual in the way that she observed Decoration Day.

My maternal and paternal grandparents are all buried in the same cemetery. Each set of great-grandparents is buried in a separate cemetery. A few years ago when I was home I decided that I would make a note of all the stones in the cemetery on the hill that I thought had any relation to my family. Much to my surprise I found the headstone for my paternal great-great-grandparents. The information on their headstone confirmed the information I already had in my file. The family had never known where they were buried and until that time we always supposed that they did not have a headstone.

Things are different today. My brothers, sister and I take turns decorating the graves twice a year now. We decorate for Memorial Day and again for the winter holidays. In the frozen tundra of Wisconsin there is no lawn maintenance in winter, so, in addition to a Christmas wreath, we sometimes put up a decorated Christmas tree for age-appropriate deceased. Although I have not seen any in Livermore cemeteries, in the Midwest solar lights are becoming a popular grave ornament. Today one can also purchase plastic or silk flowers, or an arrangement already prepared that lasts longer than fresh flowers.

I never go home that I don't visit the graves of my ancestors. I think it pleases my Mother very much to know that we are carrying on the tradition she started.

Cemeteries can be excellent sources of genealogical information. Using tombstones, you could find an individual's birth and death dates, and perhaps information about military service. Sometimes you will discover epitaphs that give you insight into the individual's sense of humor, cause of death, or even the way other people felt about him or her.

Articles Worth Reading Again

By George Anderson

All issues of the *Livermore Roots Tracer* from the very beginning of our Society are now online. That makes it possible to go back and single out articles that are worth rereading today. One such article is "On Visiting My Mother's Birth Place," by David Abrahams. It can be found at http://www.l-ags.org/tracer/vol_32_1.pdf, page 6.

David describes, in a very readable style, a research process that is successful but often overlooked: to hire professionals to speed up the search and greatly deepen the results, compared to what could be obtained by do-it-yourself efforts.

David and his wife, Jolene, booked an eight-day river cruise in Germany and scheduled a one-day departure from the boat to visit the town where he knew his mother was born. His travel agent found an organization in Germany that specializes in helping visiting American Genealogists.

In the final paragraph of his article, David sums up the results. "Not being able to speak German, and not knowing the details of the area, Ute Boese and The German-American Connection <http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/> really came through for us - more than I ever hoped for. The fee she charged us, about \$550, was well worth it. This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience and was the absolute highlight of our trip. To give credit to another who helped us we acknowledge the superior assistance of our travel agent, Micky Strahl at Vacation Discounters in San Ramon."



Rancho de José Silveira Santos

By Teresa Costa Fraser

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Livermore Roots Tracer, Volume 34, Issue #2, May 2014. It has been revised.]

It all started when I was searching for the date and place of my 3rd great-grandfather's death. José Silveira Santos, my 3rd great-grandfather, probably died sometime in 1892 as inscribed on his grave marker at the Holy Ghost Cemetery, (aka) Holy Spirit Cemetery in Fremont, California. This is the story of how I discovered and located Rancho de José Silveira Santos.

As I was searching the *Morning Call* (San Francisco) newspaper for a death notice or obituary, I discovered a two-sentence paragraph in the 12 November 1892 issue stating that his will had been filed for probate.

“The will of Joseph Santos has been filed for probate, leaving property worth \$19,000 to his three children. Santos was the farmer near Centerville lately killed by a runaway accident.”

Following the Trail of Evidence

After some digging, I learned that Alameda County probate record case files could be viewed at the Alameda County Administration Building, Court Civil Records Management Office at 1221 Oak Street, Room 16 in Oakland.

Unfortunately, I did not know the office closed at 2:30 pm due to government cutbacks. I was only able to obtain the *Inventory and Appraisement* section of his probate file that afternoon.

At the time of his death, my great grandfather owned a certain tract of land in Washington Township County of Alameda State of California lying on the Southerly side of the road leading from Niles to Centerville and about one half mile East of said town of Centerville containing 44.5 acres.

Now that I had the legal description of my great-grandfather's property, I figured I could easily locate it on a map. I searched the *Historic Land Ownership and Reference Atlases, 1507-2000: Alameda, 1878 Collection* at Ancestry.com and found the *Farm Ownership Map 005, Washington, Newark, Ex Mission, San Jose, and Rancho Del Aqua Caliente*. It included Centerville. I searched through the names of the Centerville property owners, parcel by parcel, but did not find Joseph Santos.

I also *googled* Washington Township, Alameda County to see what I could discover about the area. I found a website for the Washington Township Historical Society, but it did not appear to have been updated in a while. It did however have links to local history resources that led me to the Museum of Local History in Fremont, California. Their website states that they are a “non-profit all volunteer group of people dedicated to researching and preserving the diverse history of Washington.

My husband and I visited the Museum of Local History at 190 Anza Street in Fremont, California. We met Gil Garza and Patricia Wipfli Schaffarczyk. I explained that I was searching for my ancestor's property that he owned upon his death. They were quite familiar with the Santos family name. In fact, Patricia was familiar with the Santos Farm. She remembered a barn being moved from the Santos' Farm to the Shinn

Historic Park and Arboretum in Fremont. She searched through the museum's archive for a report on the Santos Farm and then telephoned an active member of the local historical preservation community for more information about the report. He was certain the report was available online. As I was showing Gil the *Farm Ownership Map 005 ...*, I noticed the initials



JSS and 17A on one of the parcels. My great-grandfather's initials were JSS. I did not realize until later that I had located a portion of my great-grandfather's property.

A Wild Goose Chase

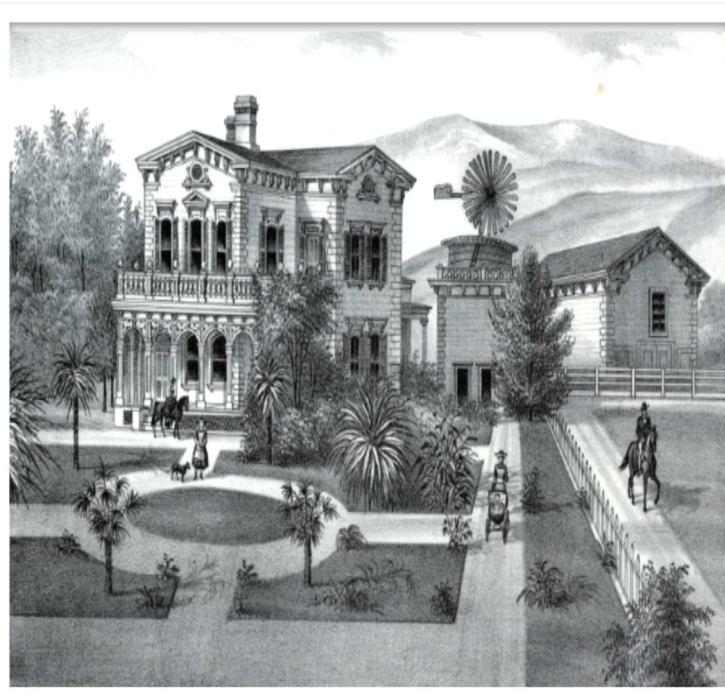
Before heading back to Dublin, we hurriedly drove north to the Shinn Historic Park and Arboretum located at 1251 Peralta Blvd. in Fremont. It was nearly dark. We parked our car and started walking down the driveway past the Shinn House, a wooden Victorian style house. We could see an old red barn through an orchard of fruit trees. I was doing the *happy* dance while Barry photographed the barn and surrounding orchards. I had to remind myself that it was possible that this barn did not belong to my ancestors.

The next day, I googled “Santos Farm + City of Fremont” and one of the results that popped up was a detailed report titled, “Santos Farm, 1481 Mowry Avenue, Fremont, Alameda County, CA” from the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record/Historic American Landscapes Survey Collections.

The contents of the report included an historical context section outlining the history of the Washington Township and arrival of the Portuguese immigrants to the area.

After reviewing the report, I realized that the Santos barn at the Shinn Park and Arboretum came from the Joseph John Santos' Farm, not the José Silveira Santos' Farm. I also discovered that the City of Fremont, Community Development Department has a number of Historical and Architectural Assessment reports available online. The reports were compiled by architectural historians and include a list of Alameda County public records and sources. Of great interest to me were the maps and records the architectural historians were able to obtain from the Alameda County Assessor's Office.

Finally, I created my own historic map overlay using Lisa Louise Cooke's book, “The Genealogist's Goggle Toolbox.” The map overlay enabled me to see exactly where my great-grandfather's property was located on the County Road leading from Niles to Centreville [now Peralta Blvd.] in Centreville [now Fremont]. It is also interesting to note that the Howard Overacker, Esq. residence was just across the County Road from my great-grandfather's property.



Howard Overacker, Esq. residence as illustrated in the *Historic Land Ownership and Reference Atlases, 1507-200: Alameda*

Although I was disappointed to learn that the old red barn at Shinn Park and Arboretum did not belong to my ancestors, I did track down my great-grandfather's property on Peralta Blvd.

I also had some fun learning how to plot a land description and creating a historic map overlay. Finally, I was pleased to learn that the Museum of Local History in Fremont is dedicated to researching and preserving the diverse history of Washington Township. I may donate my Santos genealogy research to the museum to ensure that it will be available to others for years to come.

Member Happenings and Events

By Teresa Costa Fraser

Leora Frise recently found a postcard from her mother-in-law, Lois Wenger Williams (1923-2009). It was dated September 28, 1991 and mailed from New York City to her stepson, John Williams. You may remember reading Leora's article, *Lois Virginia Wenger: "Rosie the Riveter,"* in the August 2014 issue of the Livermore Roots Tracer. She transcribed the postcard message below:

My sister Margaret drove us all thru PA, Del MD and VA visiting the historical places and relatives and then taken to DC, right to our hotel, less than a block from where I used to live 45 years ago. Now the Australian embassy is there.

Couldn't go in White House, King Hussain was visiting. Wall Street is a dinky narrow 1/4 mile alley-all that money in that small space, walked to the Empire State Building and today went to Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island and take in the World Trade Center.

Leora remembers Lois saying she could see the White House from her apartment in Washington D.C. After reading the postcard, Leora looked up address of the Embassy of Australia on Google.

"The embassy is located at 1601 Massachusetts Ave. N. W., Washington, DC, and extends through to 16th Street," stated Leora. "Lois's apartment would have been on 16th Street N.W. at the back of the Embassy. From here, it was a clear shot [well sort of]. The view was blocked by the traffic and trees, to see the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue."

"I followed around the Embassy to 16th Street on the Google map and then followed it down 16th Street to the right. Sure enough, I ended up a block away from the front of the White House. A park separated me. There is now an underpass on 16th, right in front of where she lived. Just found this interesting and wanted to share."



The Embassy of Australia in Washington, D.C. at 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W. Courtesy of <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/27343260>.



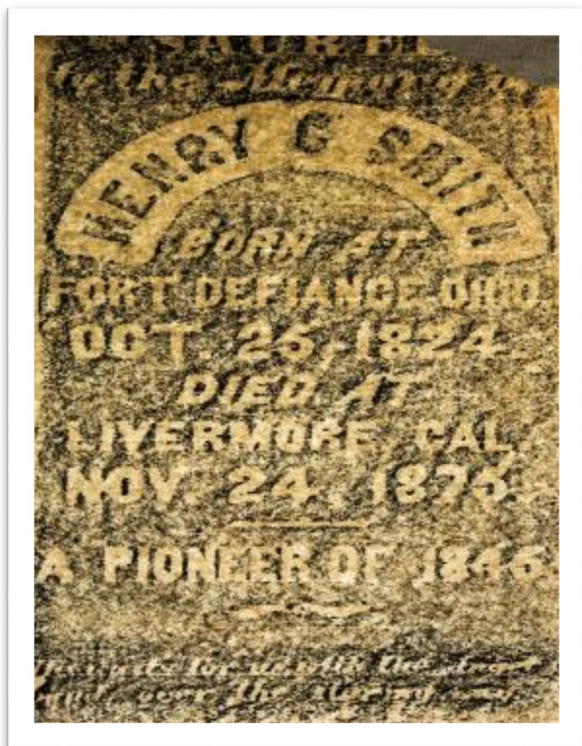
The White House at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Lois said she could see the White House from her apartment in Washington D.C.

Oak Knoll Cemetery Gravestone Rubbings

You never know what treasures are just around the corner waiting to be discovered. Several months ago the Livermore Heritage Guild was offered some Oak Knoll Cemetery gravestone rubbings. Dick Finn travelled to Menlo Park to pick up the rubbings.

They were made in the 1960's of some of the gravestones that were still on the hill at the old Oak Knoll Cemetery in Livermore. After reviewing the rubbings, Dick said no new information was found. Years ago the DAR and in later years L-AGS did surveys of existing gravestones. Now there are rubbings that show what the original gravestones looked like. Some are very plain and some are very ornate.

The rubbings were kept in a large stiff folder, so they are in fairly good shape. Here's a list of the gravestone rubbings: Narcissa Arnett, Louise Classen, Baby Classen, Joel Harlan (large land owner in the valley and pioneer of 1846), John Jackson (Susan Junk's ancestor), S. M. A. Jackson, David Jenkins, Farewell Ogden, and Henry C. Smith, "father of Alameda County."



Photograph of Henry C. Smith's gravestone rubbing. Courtesy of Dick Finn.

Genealogy Discoveries Closer Than You Think

At the December 2014 L-AGS Board Meeting, Joy Cohn mentioned that she had traced one of her branches up to Salem Village, Massachusetts and is related to Nathaniel Putnam Senior (1619-1700) through Benjamin Putnam of the Witch Trials.

Tom Mathews revealed that he is a descendent of Nathaniel Putnam's son, John Putnam. Also, Rebecca Towne Nurse, Tom's 8th great-grandmother, was one of the accused witches who was convicted and sentenced.

Upon counting up and down the branches, they discovered they are 10th cousins. Joy and Tom have volunteered to present a program about the Genealogical Aftermath of the Salem Witch Trials at the October L-AGS meeting.



Rebecca Nurse's grave marker at Nurse Homestead Cemetery, Danvers, Essex County, Massachusetts. Courtesy of <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu>.

What's New at the Pleasanton Library

Courtesy of Tim Johnston

The Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society in cooperation with the City of Pleasanton Library, maintains a large collection of genealogical materials, comprising of over 1,000 books, over 550 CD-ROMs, the California Death Index on microfiche for 1940-1994, Federal Census microfilms (1860-1920) for the Pleasanton-Livermore part of Alameda County, and genealogical periodicals from across the United States. The genealogy book collection is listed in the library's on-line catalog at [In addition](#), there are two computers dedicated to genealogical research near the Genealogy Collection. Genealogy docents are available on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments can be arranged via email at docents.chair@L-AGS.org.

Here is a list of recently published books available at the Pleasanton Library:

1. 929.1072 BRELAND.

Breland, Claudia C. *Searching For Your Ancestors in Historic Newspapers*. ©2014. Available at Genealogy Reference (Library use only).

2. 929.1072

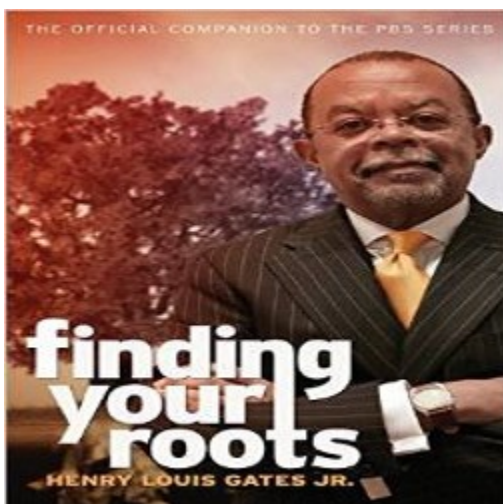
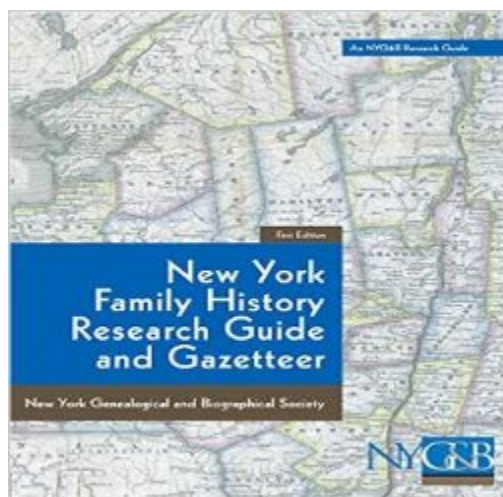
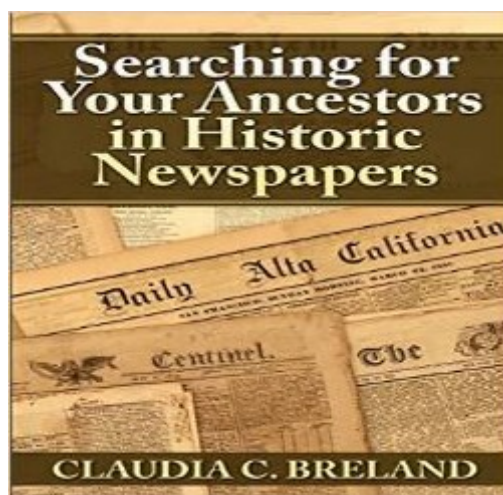
New York family history research guide and gazetteer / prepared by The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society ; managing editors, Naomi Joshi, Michael J. Leclerc, Cathy Michelsen, Susan R. Miller, McKelden Smith, Catherine Ziegler. ©2014. First Edition. Available at Genealogy Reference (Library use only).

3. 929.1072 GATES

Finding your roots : the official companion to the PBS series / Henry Louis Gates Jr. ; foreword by David Altshuler. ©2014. Available at New Books.

4. 929.2 LINDENMEYER

The Cockerton story : the Mathew Cockerton family and their desendants in America, 1849-1993 / by Ruth Gates Lindenmeyer ; edited and compiled by Linda A. Driver. ©2013. Available at Genealogy Reference (Library use only).





G. R. O. W.

Genealogy Resources On the Web — The Page That Helps Genealogy Grow!

Compiled by Susan Johnston and Kay Speaks



Download RootsTech 2015 Syllabus while
it is still available and watch meeting sessions.

<http://tinyurl.com/RootsTech-Syllabus-2015>

<http://rootstech.org/?lang=eng>

Do you get tired of using the same online search engines and websites? Follow these online search examples for this month's website awareness exercise. Look at all options. Explore! Use the back button to get where you need to be to continue with the exercise. Start with the "Bing" search engine, www.bing.com. Type "finding unique genealogy resources"; then follow the directions below as you move through the exercise. Think of this as a slow-paced genealogy treasure hunt. We are looking at new types of resources.

GENEALOGY REFDESK.COM

<http://www.genwed.com>

Select: **Ireland > Leinster-Laighin Province**. Under County Dublin, select the new "Index of Early Marriage Records and Intent to Marry Statements" extracted from Dublin, Ireland. Select "Religious Society of Friends' letters and records", explore this website. Then scroll to the "Useful Genealogy Links" shortcut almost at the bottom of the page and click ...

Family Bible Extractions of Genealogy Records at Ancestor Hunt:

http://www.ancestorhunt.com/family_bible_records.htm Select this link and choose "Duncan Family Bible Records", scroll down to the links under "Footnotes". Select "Duncan Bible Records & Images". Scroll past the images of births, marriages and deaths and click on "Free Genealogy Search Engines" and select on the far right the link ...

Prison Inmate Search:

http://www.ancestorhunt.com/prison_search.htm

[Note: After clicking the link above, you may prefer to skip to next search topic. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click "Online Services".] Select "Alabama Prison Inmates Locator" and type "Smith" in the "Search by Last Name" box. Click "Search" and scroll down the results to find and select "Smith, Andrea". Now, go to the top and click "Inmate Info" where you have a selection of

inmate options to investigate. Move to the bottom and select, "Online Services". In the search box at the top right, type "genealogy" and select "County Genealogy and Historical Societies".

RootsTech 2015 - FamilySearch Update

FamilySearch.org (FS) has turned their focus to their indexing programs. FS will still index data, but not as they have in the past few years—only when the collections are smaller and it is not feasible to outsource.

Since FS started in 1894, they have collected 2.5 million microfilm rolls and one million microfiche. FS has 3.5 billion images. Their conversion collection is 30 petabytes and they are adding 10 terabytes daily. The announcement released at RootsTech said the volume creates a challenge of accessibility and searchability. Imagine all the storage space the originals are consuming!

Their RootsTech tag line was, "FamilySearch Indexing: It's a Whole New World!" FS have people all over the world indexing records 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They have the indexing process mastered and without much effort, they can have equipment on the ground and satellite feeds uploading and downloading data 24 hours a day within a few days. They are relying on church members and the public to index the data.

NewsBank (NB), parent company of Genealogy-Bank, announced their collaboration at the conference. NB's goal is to provide researchers tens of millions of current archives news articles from primary sources at local, state, regional, national and international levels. There will be modern and historical content. As FS works with vital records, they will start adding newspaper's rich content to their scanning and indexing.

FamilySearch and NewsBank announced at RootsTech they would be collaborating on a new collection of indexed obituaries. All the information that provides a rich "biographical sketch" of a person's life will be included. obituary.

Thanks for following along on a different type of G.R.O.W. column. Did you explore some of the other options available that you might not have noticed in the past?—Kay Speaks

Future General Meetings

Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton

Visitors are always welcome.

June 8, 7:30 p.m.

Ron Fillion

SFGenealogy.com

July 13, 7:30 p.m.

Debbie Shields

Getting Organized: What a Mess!

August 10, 7:30 p.m.

Gene Block

*Four Main Reasons Why We Hit Brick Walls in
Our Research When the Records are Available*

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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