

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

Craig Mullins, Ken Jensen, LaDonna Jensen, Ronald Welch

Thanks to the generosity of the following L-AGS members

Patrons

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

Benefactors

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

Total L-AGS Members as of December 1, 2015—129 Memberships and 154 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

Table of Contents

President's Message by Patrick Lofft.....	3	Oak Knoll by Richard Finn and Peter Kitchingham.....	10
From the Editor's Desk by Teresa Fraser.....	4	William Henry Streeper, Sr.:	
Unlikely Sources for Breaking Through Brick Walls by Gene R. Block.....	5	Pony Express Rider.....	14
In Memoriam: George Watkins Anderson.....	8	GROW by Susan Johnston and Kay Speaks.....	19

A Message from our President

Here it is November and my 2-year term as president is almost to an end. I have enjoyed serving you. Fortunately, I had the privilege of working with an outstanding board that actually did all the work and made L-AGS attractive for new members. Consider stepping up and running for office or volunteering to chair a committee. You can nominate yourself or team up with other members to invigorate L-AGS. We are not getting any younger, you know.

Marilyn Glass and Diane Wiedel provided a memorable series of speakers for the past year. Consider joining them during the coming year to select additional program innovations. **Joy Cohn, Doug Mumma** and **Duncan Tanner** worked together to implement the Pay Pal option for membership renewal. **Julie Liu** accepted the nomination to lead L-AGS during the coming year.

Tom Matthews graciously greeted everyone at general meetings for the past two years and will replace **Nancy Southwick** as the future corresponding secretary. **Debbie Mascot** unfailingly compiled and distributed the eBulletin every month while managing a demanding work schedule. **Jane Southwick** facilitated in recruiting somewhat reticent members to step forward. **Leora Frise** capably stepped forward to serve as recording secretary. **Teresa Costa Fraser** undertook the demanding position of editor for our quarterly journal. **Ricahrd Finn** and his cousin, **Peter Kitchingham**, assisted numerous researchers with information about those originally buried in the old Oak Knoll Cemetery.

Richard Finn, Frank Geasa, Bill George, Garl Satterthwaite and I assisted L-AGS members and guest researchers at the Pleasanton Library. Sharpen your own research skills by joining us on Wednesday mornings. **Richard Finn** and **Frank Geasa** also served as docents at the Livermore Family History Center. **Kay Speaks** and **Sue Johnston** provided expert research resources in each issue of the *Livermore Roots Tracer*. **Anne Les** consistently informed media outlets about L-AGS activities. **Jolene Abrahams** and **Barbara Hannon** emerged as the future L-AGS membership team.

They are all great people with lots of good ideas to develop L-AGS and a share the concern for our members. Elections for the 2016 president and board positions will be held at the December 14 general meeting.

L-AGS again provided Heritage Happening events during October Family History month at the Dublin, Livermore, and Pleasanton libraries. It is a beneficial public service offered by members of L-AGS, SRVGS and DAR.

One position which L-AGS seeks a volunteer is the public relations chair. This person would be interested in contacting members of the media. This position will include monthly postings of our meeting information on the Tri-Valley pages of Facebook, Patch.com and other useful sites. In addition, when we have public events or speakers with broad appeal this person would develop and send out a notice seeking editorial space in the local newspapers and electronic media such as Tri-Valley Community TV. If you think this is something you would like to try, email me at president@L-AGS.org. As L-AGS moves forward this will be an increasingly important position. We are also seeking a representative for the Livermore Cultural Arts Council. Monthly meetings are at 7:30 pm on the first Wednesday of the month at the Robert Livermore Community Center. Please contact me at president@L-AGS.org if you are interested in representing L-AGS.

Sign up to bring refreshments for upcoming meetings. If you missed the sign-up sheet passed around at our recent meeting, please sign up at our next meeting to bring refreshments.

Again, I thank you all for your friendship and support. You are what makes L-AGS the great organization it is.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Lofft

From the Editor's Desk

By Teresa Costa Fraser



This issue of the *Livermore Roots Tracer* is dedicated to the memory of George Anderson. He was a great man and extraordinary human being. He will be greatly missed. We were lucky to have known him. I believe

the following quote can be ascribed to George:

The qualities of a great man are vision, integrity, courage, understanding, the power of articulation, and profundity of character. —Dwight D. Eisenhower

This is the last issue of the *Livermore Roots Tracer* for 2015. It has been a pleasure serving as editor for the past two years. I have been incredibly lucky to have worked with so many talented writers and photographers as we worked together to create 7 issues of the journal.

Here is a glimpse of what you will find in this issue:

Patrick Lofft bids us a final farewell in "A Message From Our President."

Gene Block will undoubtedly expand your thinking about sources in his comprehensive article, "Unlikely Sources for Breaking Through Brick Walls."

Richard Finn and his cousin, Peter Kitchingham from England are working on identifying all of the people buried at the old Oak Knoll Cemetery in Livermore. Their article, "Oak Knoll," details its history and includes facts about a few of the interesting people buried at Oak Knoll. Be sure and check out Richard's photographs, especially the lavish and decorated gravestones.

New member, Mary Catherine Johnson is lucky that her ancestor, William Henry Streeper, Sr. left behind the stories and reflections of his lifetime. At his death, William Streeper was the last remaining Pony Express Rider.

G.R.O.W. columnists, Susan Johnston and Kay Speaks provide an overview of online resources to help you find a wide variety of photographs.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the *Livermore Roots Tracer*. Wishing you and your family a happy holiday season. I bid you all fond farewell.

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
 Associate Editor.....Jane Southwick
 Web Editor.....Vicki Renz
 Printing and Distribution.....Teresa Costa Fraser
 G.R.O.W. Column.....
Susan G. Johnston and Kay Speaks

Unlikely Sources for Breaking Through Brick Walls

By Gene R. Block

What does an article in a company employee newspaper about a 25-year service award, a coroner's inquest report, and an article in a religious newspaper about a 50th wedding anniversary celebration *all* have in common? Strange as it may seem these three different and totally unrelated items allowed me to break through several brick walls I had run up against while tracing my family history.

Normally when genealogists break through a brick wall while tracing their family's history, they do so in a conventional way. Perhaps they located a relative who has a family bible in their possession, which lists the date and place of birth of an ancestor being traced. Maybe a break-through occurred when a long forgotten baptismal certificate or marriage license was discovered in the estate of an elderly relative who recently passed away. Or maybe through a great deal of detective work a researcher is able to locate a definitive official record in an archive that provides the information necessary to document a family line several generations back. Genealogists hope to locate these types of records in order to break through brick walls. Nevertheless, as I have learned while tracing my family history for over 35 years, breaking through brick walls can also come from the most unlikely sources. This article is about some unlikely sources that allowed me to break through some pretty tough brick walls.

Employee Service Award

One of the unlikely sources that allowed me to break through one of my brick walls was an article about my maternal grandfather, Fred Stanze, receiving a 25-year service award from his employer. But, first some background information. As a young child growing up, I remember my grandmother, Cecelia Stanze, telling me stories about her early childhood days in St. Louis.

These stories probably sparked my interest in genealogy, though many years later to be sure. I remember her telling me that as a young girl she spent time on her grandmother's farm in Southern Illinois. I do not remember her mentioning where in Illinois the farm was located, or the names of her grandparents. I knew her maiden name, as well as her mother's maiden name. Nevertheless, that did not help me trace her family in Illinois, since these names were rather common. None of the information in any of the records I found provided clues to help me extend her family line. I had hit a brick wall.

After my mother passed away, I helped my father sort out her belongings. When I emptied the nightstand next to her bed, I found a stack of papers. One of the papers was an article from a 1930 company employee newspaper about my grandfather, Fred Stanze, receiving a 25-year service award from his employer. As was customary at the time, he was presented with a watch for his years of service. The presenter was quoted in the article joking that Fred needed a new watch as his watch had stopped the day he was to be married. He almost missed the train to Waterloo, the city in Illinois where my grandparents were to be married.



I had been searching in St. Louis without success for their marriage record as both of my grandparents were born in St. Louis and lived there at the time of their marriage. After I thought about it, I realized that my grandmother while living in St. Louis, probably chose to get married in Illinois where most of her relatives

lived at the time. Now, knowing the city where their marriage took place and surmising that many of my grandmother's relatives probably lived nearby, I was quickly able to identify both sides of my grandmother's family.

I discovered that her father's family had immigrated to America from Herdorf, Germany and her mother's family had come to America from County Galway, Ireland. As I continued my research in the area, I was able to make contact with some distant cousins who still lived nearby. They provided me with considerable information as well as a picture of one set of my maternal great-great grandparents. It is interesting to note that the genealogical breakthrough on my grandmother's side of the family came about from information in an article about my grandfather in a company newspaper and a joke someone made when presenting him with a service award.

When I first read the article about his award, I focused on the event and the picture that appeared in the newspaper. It was not until I reread the article that it registered with me that the comment about the city where he and my grandmother were married was something I had not previously known. Once I realized that, and concluded my grandmother probably chose to get married in the area where many of her relatives still lived, I was quickly able to locate both sides of her family in the records of that area. Had I not kept and subsequently reread the article about my grandfather's service award, I still might not have broken through the brick wall on my grandmother's side of the family.

Over the years, when I have come to a dead end, I stop my work on a particular person or branch of the family and move on to other research. Later, when I have gone back and started working again on the line on which I had hit a dead end, I review all the material I have accumulated. More than once the clue I needed

was already in the information I had, but I had overlooked it.

Some years ago while visiting my son on the East Coast I read an article about a local man researching his great-grandfather. After years of research, he finally discovered enough information about his great-grandfather to verify that he had fought in the Civil War and he was even able to find his great grandfather's gravesite in a long forgotten cemetery. When asked what advice he would give to other researchers, he recommended "hoarding every scrap of paper you can find on the person you are researching and then periodically going back and rereading everything you have collected." That is what he did and it is what allowed him to make his breakthrough. This is good advice and as I have discovered over the years, it pays big dividends.

Coroner's Report

Probably the most unusual source that allowed me to break through one of my brick walls was of all things, the minutes of a Coroner's inquest. My paternal great-grandfather, George Ruffle, committed suicide in St. Louis, Missouri in 1907 by hanging himself from the rafters in his basement. The following day the Coroner in St. Louis held an inquest on the suicide. George's wife, Catherine, my great-grandmother, and George's daughter, Ida Block, my paternal grandmother who found her father's body, were called to testify at the hearing. I learned a lot about George's mental and physical state in the days immediately prior to his taking his life from the questions asked by the Coroner and Catherine and Ida's answers. While this information was certainly interesting, it did not contain any genealogical information and certainly not any information that would allow me to break through any brick walls.

The last question the Coroner asked my great-grandmother was where she planned to bury her husband. She replied that she was considering

having him buried in St. Marcus Cemetery as he was Catholic and she was not Catholic. Until I read Catherine's answer to that question, I had never even considered searching Catholic records since no one on my father's side of the family was Catholic. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, no one on that side of the family ever attended any church. Nevertheless, there it was in black and white.

I knew that George was born in St. Louis in 1854, and *now* knew he was a baptized Catholic. No wonder I could not find any records for George and his parents. I had been searching for baptismal records in Protestant churches. It is interesting to note that although my grandparents did not attend church, they had my father baptized in a Protestant Evangelical church.

I had never been able to determine who George's parents were. I suspected his parents were Johann and Mary Ruffle because they were about the right ages. Despite all my efforts, I had never been able to prove this connection.

I also knew from the 1900 census that George's parents were born in Switzerland. I then made an assumption that fortunately proved to be correct. I assumed that since both George's parents came from Switzerland, they probably spoke German. In checking, I learned that there were three German speaking Catholic churches in St. Louis at the time of George's birth. When I reviewed the baptismal records for these three churches, my hunch proved correct. In the records of the third church I searched, I found George's baptismal record. It listed George's parents as Johann and Mary Ruffle and even listed his mother's maiden name as Kaiser. I had broken through my Ruffle brick wall.

The irony of it all is that my great-grandmother was incorrect about the cemetery in St. Louis where she had my great-grandfather laid to rest. St. Marcus was not, nor has ever been a Catholic cemetery. It is a non-denominational ceme-

tery. When I ordered the Coroner's Inquest Report for George Ruffle, it never occurred to me that the answer to one of the questions asked at the inquest would allow me to go back one more generation on that side of my family tree.



Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Another unlikely source for breaking through one of my brick walls was an article in a religious newspaper about my great-great grandparent's 50th wedding anniversary celebration.

My paternal great-great grandfather, Barney Hysinger, was born in Germany. The only information my father could remember about Barney was that he had been active in the early Jewish community in St. Louis. After not finding Barney's obituary in any of the major St. Louis newspapers, I checked the Jewish newspapers published in St. Louis at the time of Barney's death in 1897. I quickly found his obituary. I then decided to see if this same newspaper had published an obituary for Barney's wife, Henrietta, who had died several years earlier. I found her obituary and at the end of it, there was a notation that the paper had printed a complete background on Barney and Henrietta several years earlier on their 50th wedding anniversary celebration in 1889. I located the article about their wedding anniversary celebration on microfilm. At the end of the article, there was a

Unlikely Sources continued on Page 16

In Memoriam—George Watkins Anderson, Jr.

1924-2015

George Watkins Anderson Jr. was born February 9, 1924 in Kansas City, Missouri, the first child of six to George Watkins Anderson and Beulah Blanche (Black) Anderson. He died at his home in Pleasanton, California after a brief illness.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 65 years, Harriet Alvina (Martinson) Anderson, and survived by his son, Eric Lee Anderson of Pleasanton, his daughter, Gail Louise (Anderson) Dressler and her husband Donavin Dressler of Fremont, California. He has two grandchildren, David Nathaniel Dressler of Fremont and Sarah Ruth Dressler of San Jose. He has three remaining siblings; his brother James Anderson of Arizona and his two sisters, Mildred Wolfe and Margie Chapman, both of Minnesota.

George was raised in Mankato, Minnesota. He was the first in his family to get a college degree. He worked initially at a local radio station while attending Iowa State College, then joined the Navy when the US entered World War II. While at the radio station, he was the one who received the urgent news notices. He has preserved an original paper strip of the notification of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

George proved himself academically in the Navy. He graduated first in his class from Columbia University out of 2000 midshipmen. He was sent to various academic courses by the Navy such that by the time he completed everything, the war had ended. However, he deferred his discharge so that he could be on a supply ship

that took part in the Bikini Island atomic bomb testing. Prior to destroying a captured German ship, he was allowed with others to board the ship. He still has a name plate of the ship's captain and a knife from one of the German sailors.

He met his future wife in Mankato while a student at the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis. In fact, he was so preoccupied with his studies that he actually forgot about their first date! They were nevertheless married on June 11, 1949. After completion of his PhD degree in physics, he was hired by Sandia Corporation (then part of the Atomic Energy Commission) and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Both Eric and Gail were born there. The family moved to California in 1962, where George continued to work at Sandia Laboratories in Livermore until he retired in 1983.



George's avocation and passion was genealogy. He began studying his family origins as a 15-year-old for a high school project, and continued to his last days alive. He was an integral part of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society (L-AGS), having served in several official functions as Publicity Chair, 1st VP, Membership Chair and Web Editor. He was a cofounder of the Tri-Valley History Council, and led them to preserve and archive many historical documents for public use. He volunteered countless hours at the Pleasanton Museum on Main, indexing burial records, court documents, and census records, among other things. At the Pleasanton Library,

George helped to set up computers at the advent of the digital age, and started a program to mentor others in genealogy research. He was also active in the Tri-Valley Macintosh Users Group (TMUG), as well as the Sandia Retirees Association. Along with Hamet, George befriended, inspired and guided scores of people locally as well as abroad in genealogical and historical research. Because of his work, local historical information is not only indexed but now searchable online.

Another organization that benefitted from George's energy and attention was Friendship Force of the Bay Area. FFBA is an organization that engenders friendships between adults all over the world by organizing exchange visits with each other. The goal is to promote "Peace through Friendship." George and Harriet traveled to Chile, China, Kyrgyzstan, Holland, New Zealand and Australia through FFBA. As part of their love of history and genealogy, they also traveled extensively in Europe and the UK. They hosted three exchange students through Youth for Understanding (YFU), from Chile, Switzerland and Greece, and both Eric and Gail were able to live abroad through YFU.

George always loved to explore. At the age of 19, he hitchhiked the first of two times across the US from Minnesota to California. He was known to take his family on picnics at a moment's notice, and nearly every summer went on road trips, usually involving camping, through national parks in the US and Canada. The destinations always had a purpose, whether it was educational or to stay connected with extended family in the Midwest.

When his grandchildren were old enough, he enjoyed taking them on outings outdoors, often with an obligatory stop for ice cream that "happened" to be at lunchtime. George was an early member of the Sierra Club and later the Nature Conservancy. He was even an adven-

turous eater who loved to explore ethnic foods. At a restaurant, he would always order last, so as to be able to try more varieties of new food. In his later years, George taught himself to cook by using online recipes and keeping copious notes. He made delicious and nutritious meals, despite the fact that he had lost his sense of smell and most of his taste by then.

He cared lovingly for his wife as she became more infirm, until her death in August 2014. George's smile, his wit, his passion for science, his insistence on detail and accuracy, his organizational skills and his impressive intellect have earned him admiration and appreciation by many. A celebration of his life will be held in early February around the time of his birthday. Further details will be published shortly.

The family wishes to thank the following for their help in his recent illness: Drs. M. Abdel-Malik, R. Zamary, V. Jayaram-Chou, and K. Multani - all of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Vitas Hospice was of great help, as were the caregivers of From the Heart Senior Services.

In lieu of flowers, please send any donations to Livermore Amador Genealogical Society, Friendship Force of the Bay Area, Friends of the Pleasanton Library, Doctors Without Borders, or the Nature Conservancy.



Oak Knoll

By Richard Finn and Peter Kitchingham

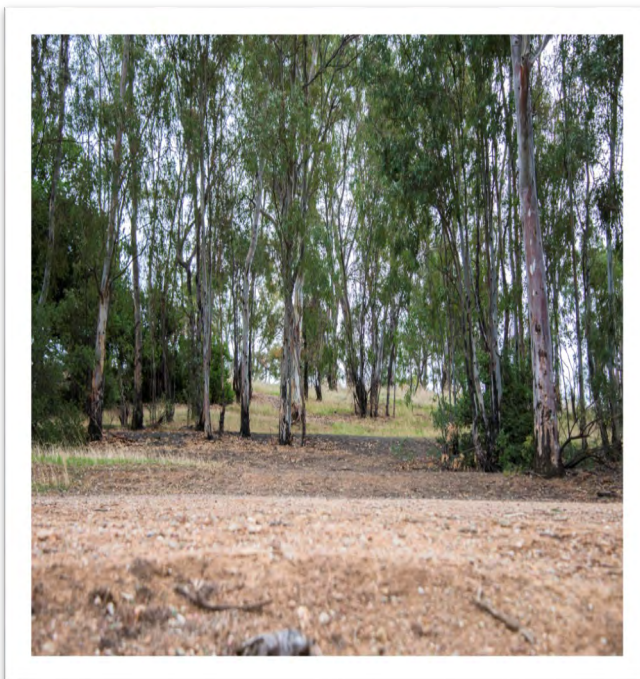
Near the corner of Stanley Boulevard and Wall Street, stands a little hill. Some call it a knoll. Over the years, the little hill has gone by a number of names, including Boot Hill (since it was the old Livermore burying ground) and Daffodil Hill (because of the thousands of daffodils the local garden club planted over the years).

The truth is, the little hill was called Oak Knoll and the cemetery on it was the Oak Knoll Cemetery. The cemetery dates back to November 1855 when little Sophia Mendenhall was buried there. In the early days, it seems the place was called Mendenhall Cemetery since the earliest burials were Mendenhalls and the cemetery was on Mendenhall property. Some say the site was called Oak Knoll Cemetery starting in January 1873.

Since the first burial in 1855, at least 270 people were buried at the Oak Knoll Cemetery. By our count, there were 328 plots (as per an 1884 map of the Cemetery showing the numbered plots). We are not sure how many people could have been buried in each plot. The last burial seems to have been Dr. William Stewart Taylor in 1931. Between the burial of Sophia Mendenhall and Dr. Taylor, a number of interesting people were also buried there. More about them later. It is noteworthy that at the bottom on the hill below the cemetery was the Mont Rouge Winery owned by A.G. Chauche.

Over the years the cemetery has had a rough life. In July 1889, there was a large fire started by using burning sticks during a religious ceremony “they carelessly set fire to the grass, and the entire cemetery was burned over, destroying all of the enclosures and doing a large amount of other damage.” Many of the grave markers were wooden so were destroyed and their information lost forever.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Oak Knoll Cemetery was used less and less because three

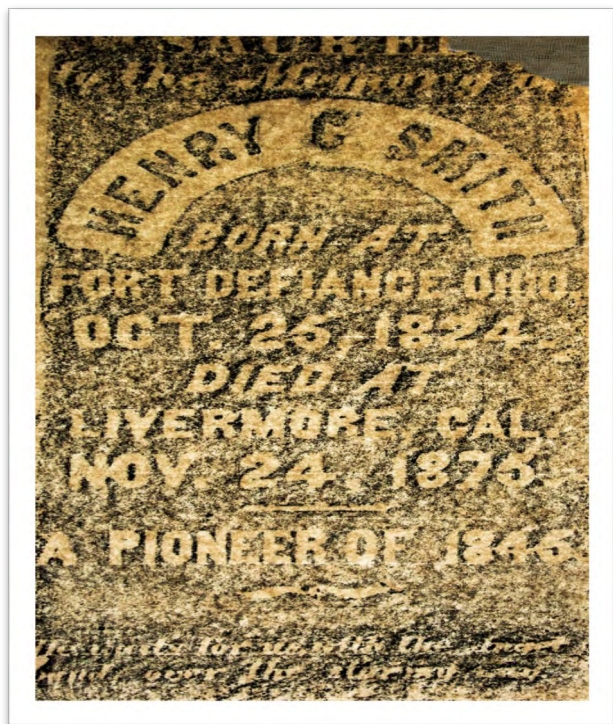


Oak Knoll, Livermore, California. Photo courtesy of Richard Finn.

additional cemeteries were opened: St. Michael’s Cemetery in about 1881; the Masonic Cemetery (Roselawn) in 1883; and the Odd Fellows Cemetery (Memory Gardens) in 1911. The great rains of March 1906 caused considerable damage to the back side of the Oak Knoll Cemetery when the Arroyo Mocho ate away the bank and caskets were exposed.

The DAR did a survey of the cemetery in 1934. They passed down a great deal of information on what was written on the grave markers, including not only names, but also sometimes the date and place of birth, date of death, age, etc.

By the early 1960s many of the gravestones listed in the DAR report were gone and many of the remaining stones were vandalized. It was in 1961/1962 that Lynda Rosinski Deirosi and a fellow teacher made rubbings of some of the remaining markers. These are very useful to researchers.



Henry C. Smith's gravestone rubbing. Photo courtesy of Richard Finn.

About this same time, interest was developing to make the old cemetery into a park, to save the open space and stop the vandalism. Livermore historian, Janet Newton wrote moving letters to the local papers. In August 1963 the city removed the existing headstones from the cemetery. Some were badly damaged in the process. Family members were given the right to claim the gravestones. One ended up in the Los Angeles area.

In April 1963, the Livermore City Council voted to abandon and remove all copings, improvements and embellishments from the Oak Knoll Cemetery and dedicate the property as A Pioneer Memorial Park. A large pedestal of rock was made, and on top of it a bronze plaque was mounted. It read:

Oak Knoll
The Pioneers Who Rest Interred
On This Knoll Had This Unique
Experience and Challenge Of
Changing A Wilderness Valley
Into A Vigorous Community
Their Efforts Have Cast The

Present As Our Deeds Shall Mould
The Future.

More interesting than the history of the cemetery, are the people who were buried there. People like George Harlan (leader of the Harlan-Young Party in 1846), Joel Harlan (another pioneer of 1846), members of the Mendenhall family, Henry Clay Smith (founder of Alameda County), Dr. William Stewart Taylor (who did much to improve the health of valley families) and many of the pioneer Teeter family.



Damaged Jackson family gravestone from Oak Knoll Cemetery, Livermore, California. Photo courtesy of Richard Finn.

A listing of who was buried at Oak Knoll Cemetery is like a Who's Who of the early days of the Livermore Valley. Besides the names above, we find Altamorano, Anderson, Arnett, Beck, Bernal, Black, Bradshaw, Ciaghell, Christensen, Clark, Cockerton, Crow, Dolan, Elliott, Esdon, Frasier, Grizel,



Sallie Teeter's gravestone from Oak Knoll Cemetery, Livermore, California. Photo courtesy of Richard Finn.

Hansen, Heslep, Higuera, Horner, Jackson, Jahnigen, Lilanthal, Livermore, Malley, Martin, McLain, McLaughlin, Mohr, Murray, Nickersen, Rochin, Sachau, Sanders, Schween, Stankey, Thompson, Weymouth, and so many more.

Here are a few of the interesting people buried at Oak Knoll:

1. Asa Worthley Brackett

Civil War veteran, Asa Worthley Brackett was born 9 June 1845 in Phillips, Franklin, Maine. He died 28 Aug 1883 in Murray Township, Alameda, California.

Asa enlisted for Civil War service with his older brother, Ansel. Both joined Company F, Maine 2nd Cavalry Regiment as Privates on 11 December 1863. As they were both in the same regiment, it is likely that Asa was nearby when Ansel was wounded and taken prisoner at the Battle of Marianna [in Florida] on 27 September 1864. Ansel died the next day from his wounds.

Asa was promoted to Corporal during 1864 and was mustered out on 6 December 1865 in Barrancas, Florida. By 1867 [and in the 1870 census] Asa was living in Grass Valley, Nevada, California, and working as a lumberman/teamster. By 1871 he was in Livermore and marries Ella L Whitmore on 20 November 1873. They do not appear to have had any children. At the time of the 1880 census, he made a return trip to Phillips, Franklin, Maine, where his father and a younger brother were still living. His gravestone was one of those moved from Oak Knoll and is now within the G.A.R. plot in Roselawn Cemetery, Livermore.

2. Anne (King) Cheney

Anna Maria[h] King was born on 9 October 1817 in Bethany, Genesee, New York. She married David J. Cheney (1812-1867) on 1 August 1835 in New York. They had 8 children, all born in New York before they came to California between 1858-1860. Two children died before they moved to California.

They were living in Washington Township, Alameda as shown in the 1860 census. David died in Centerville, Alameda, and is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery there. Anna continued to live in Washington Township, but moved to Livermore by the time of the 1880 census until she died on 3 June 1889.

Her oldest son, James H. was a sergeant in the 2nd California Cavalry. He lived in Livermore after having been in Sawtelle Nursing Home. Her fourth child, Rachel Allen, married John Taylor – more on him later.

3. Peter Classen

Peter Classen was born February 1840 in Bavaria and died 3 October 1908 on his ranch about ten miles from Livermore. He arrived in the United States in about 1857 and was naturalized on 11 March 1872 in San Leandro District County Court. He was living in Pleasanton in 1872, then moved to Concord, Contra Costa by 1876.

Peter married Louisa ? (1851-1881) before 1879 and had 3 children; all of whom died within a

year of birth. He married again about 1883/4 to Eliza Jane Browning [or Brownie] (1839-1920) and had one daughter who lived into her 90s.

Peter was a labourer and worked his way up to being a farmer/foreman at the time of his death. Peter, his first wife and their 3 children were all buried at Oak Knoll Cemetery, as well as Peter's second wife's first husband, William Cobb (1832-1881).

4. Freedom Gilson

Freedom Gilson was born on 3 November 1803 in Grafton, Windham, Vermont. He married Mary Cutler Edson (1814-1899) before 1840. They had 4 children; 3 sons and a daughter. Their oldest son, George Freedom Gilson, was a Civil War veteran, having served in Company I, 12th Vermont Infantry Regiment (1862-1863).

By July 1871, George Freedom Gilson was living in Murray Township. His brother Jewett Castello Gilson came to California in 1869, settling firstly in Centerville / Washington Township before moving again to Pleasanton [he is more associated with Oakland from 1880 until he died in 1926 [see the biographical sketch in *Wood's History of Alameda County*].



Freedom Gilson (1803-1881) marker moved from Oak Knoll Cemetery, Livermore to Pleasanton Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Pleasanton. Photo courtesy of Find A Grave.

Freedom senior was a farmer in Rockingham, Vermont until moving to join two of his sons in California, and settling in Pleasanton by September 1876. He died a few years later on 15 September 1881 in Pleasanton and was buried in Oak Knoll. It seems his stone was moved to Pleasanton Memorial Gardens, where his wife and oldest son are buried. His only daughter, Mary Emma also appears to have been buried at Oak Knoll, but she does not appear on the gravestone now in Pleasanton.

5. John Taylor

John Taylor was born about 1833 in Cayuga, New York. He died 7 August 1881 in Livermore, Alameda, California. He started a vegetable garden in Sacramento, California, in January 1852, having travelled from New York via Panama to San Francisco before settling in Sacramento. He married Rachel Allen Cheney (1842-1917) on 15 February 1860 in Alameda, California (presumably Centerville / Washington Township).

John and his family appear to have lived in Centerville / Washington Township where he purchased a 250-acre piece of land 'between Niles and Mission San Jose'. They lived there until selling up and moving to Livermore in the mid-1870s, when he purchased a ranch called 'Big Field' (now the site of Lawrence National Laboratory).

John was murdered by his son-in-law, John Poblitz, husband of Alice Adelaide Taylor, following what appears to have been an argument between the two. It would seem Taylor did not approve of Alice marrying Poblitz. He and Rachel had 11 children. Rachel was left to care for 8 of their children, as 3 had pre-deceased John. John now has a burial stone at Roselawn Cemetery with his wife and other members of their family.

Upcoming Presentation

At the February 8th L-AGS meeting, Richard will be speaking on and showing slides on *Oak Knoll, Livermore, abandoned, but not forgotten*. Invite your friends and neighbors to learn more about what went on at the little hill.

William Henry Streeper, Sr.: Pony Express Rider

By Mary Catherine Johnson

William Henry Streeper, Sr. is my ancestor. He was my great-grandmother's brother. "Uncle Willie" as he was called in my family growing up, was born on August 1, 1837 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Wilkinson Streeper and Matilda Wells.

He was so frail at the time of his birth, that his life was despaired of. For 4 months he was carried around on a pillow, but he outgrew his weaknesses and developed into a sturdy lad. When he was 6 years of age he moved with his parents to Nauvoo, Illinois, traveling by canal boat over the Allegheny Mountains. The boat was drawn on a set of wheels by horses; they traveled by steamboat down the Ohio River to its mouth at Cairo, Illinois, and then up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo. There the family remained until 1844, when they moved to St. Louis, where they lived until the spring of 1850.

We will let Mr. Streeper tell you, in his own words, about the early day experiences in the West:

"While we lived in St. Louis I worked for the gas company. My duties were to light the lamps each evening and extinguish them the following morning. I was assigned 25 lamps or ½ a route, for which I received the big salary of \$5.00 a month. After 6 months they increased my salary to \$10. With my savings I

helped my father to buy cattle for our trip to Utah. We left St. Louis in 1850 and went to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where we remained until early the following spring, when we started for Salt Lake City, reaching this valley in October of that year, a journey of many months, which they now make in a few hours with an airplane. But I don't want to ride in one of them contraptions, no siree."



William Henry Streeper, Sr. (1837-1930).

"When I was 16 years old I went with David Evans of Lehi, and several other people, to the White Mountains to establish a settlement. It wasn't a success. Then we went to Black Rock Springs, but were forced to come back to Salt Lake. Later we tried the Elk Mountains, but the Indians drove us away from there. In the spring of 1857 I was a member of company "B" of the Nauvoo Legion under the command of Robert T. Burton. We were sent to Tooele to get after the Indians who had been stealing horses."

Delivering Mail for the Pony Express

"In the early 60's I began carrying local mail, but soon after I started, got a job on the Pony Express. I rode the Pony Express during 1861-1862. My route was in Nevada, between Diamond Springs, which was in Ruby Valley or 22 miles west of Ruby Valley, to Smith Creek. From Diamond Springs it was 35 miles to our next station which was Roberts Creek; then it was another 35 miles from Roberts Creek to Dry Creek. The next station was Simpson's

Park, then from there it was 40 miles to Smith Creek, where we changed riders.” See map below.

“We rode ordinary ponies. When they got sore backs, as they sometimes did, we had to doctor them ourselves and take care of them. We stationed animals all along between stations so we could change and have fresh animals. We made them go about 7 or 8 miles an hour. How we rode like we did after dark and have no accidents I can’t see. Many is the time I have taken my supper here and my breakfast 80 or 90 miles from there. At the time of the second inauguration of Lincoln, the mail was carried from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California in a little over 7 days. We used to have some mules and some horses. I think there were 6 or 7 riders stationed on the route I was on. We sometimes rode our pony and drove pack animal before us.”

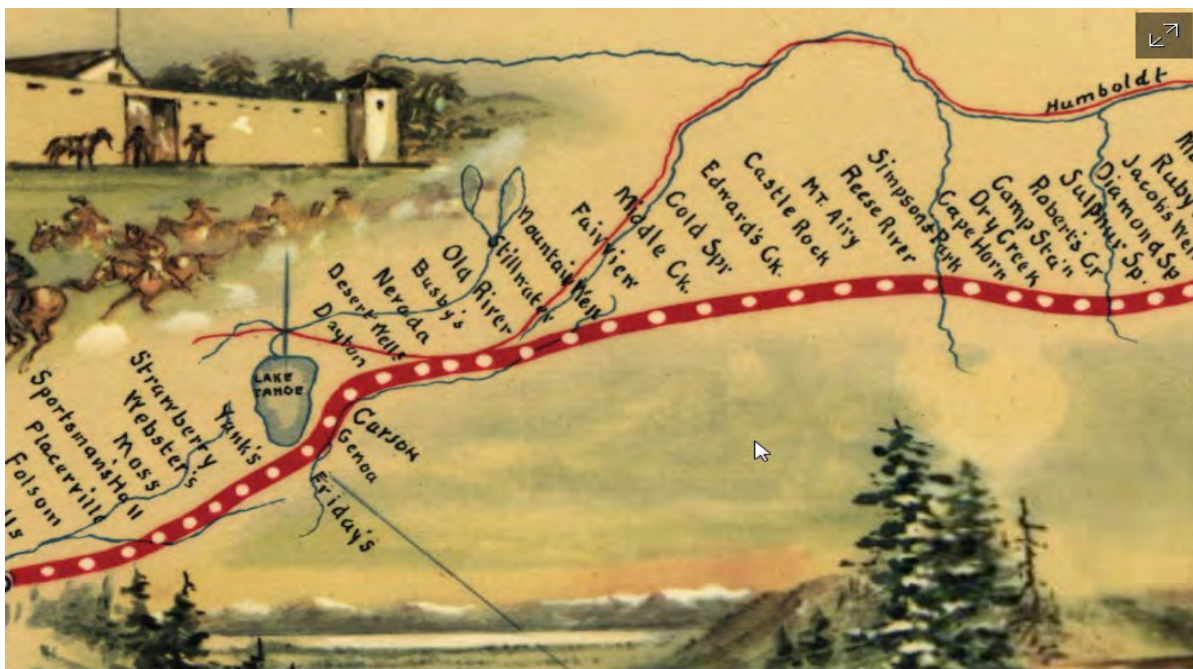
Uncle Willie had some thoughts on his experiences with Indians: “I got pretty well acquainted with some of the Indians, learned to talk enough so I could make them understand me. At one time when my shoes were badly worn and my feet were coming

through the Indians showed me how to take strips of sagebrush bark and mend them. Many Indians became very friendly towards me.”

Uncle Willie’s recollections of the harsh winters: “The winters were so cold then and the snow so deep that often I have spent 2 or 3 hours digging away snow so me and the mule could go just a few feet. The other boys wondered why I didn’t get cold. 2 men froze to death on Shell Creek once. Before I started out with mail, I always rubbed my feet and legs with snow and washed in cold water. That is why I never got cold. Used to bring in a tub of snow and let it melt. Then I would hop in.”

Some memories of “making do” when out of certain provisions: “One evening, just before sundown, Dave Proctor and his wife drove in and stopped. I told them they had better stay, as feed was good there. They did, and I ate dinner with them. The next morning I cooked breakfast. Mrs. Proctor liked my biscuits. Guess it was the ashes made them good. Didn’t have no baking powder to make them raise, so I used ashes.”

Reflections on what we would today characterize as “frontier justice”: “Well, times have



Pony express route April 3, 1860 - October 24, 1861. Map courtesy of Library of Congress.

changed since I was young. Now men won't work for a living. When they want money they just grab a gun and go after it. Some women are getting pretty expert at that, too. In the early days we didn't wait for justice. When a feller was no good, we bumped him right off without any ceremony."

Uncle Willie married Mary Amelia Richards on 16 October 1867 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Over a span of 23 years, they had 10 children. Uncle Willie had not only been a farmer, in his post-pony express days, but had also been in the merchandising and implement fields, a trustee, and for several years a director of the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society. He lived to be 93 years of age, and died on 4 October 1930 in Centerville, Utah.



Information for this article came from the following sources:

Lundberg, D. An article written for "The Citizen." Salt Lake City, Utah. 28 July 1928.

Streeper, W.H. Dictation by W.H. Streeper to his granddaughter, Eila Streeper. Before 1930.

Ward, Maurine Carr. *The Children of William Henry Streeper and Mary Amelia Richards*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Alphagraphics, 1993.



Unlikely Sources continued from Page 7

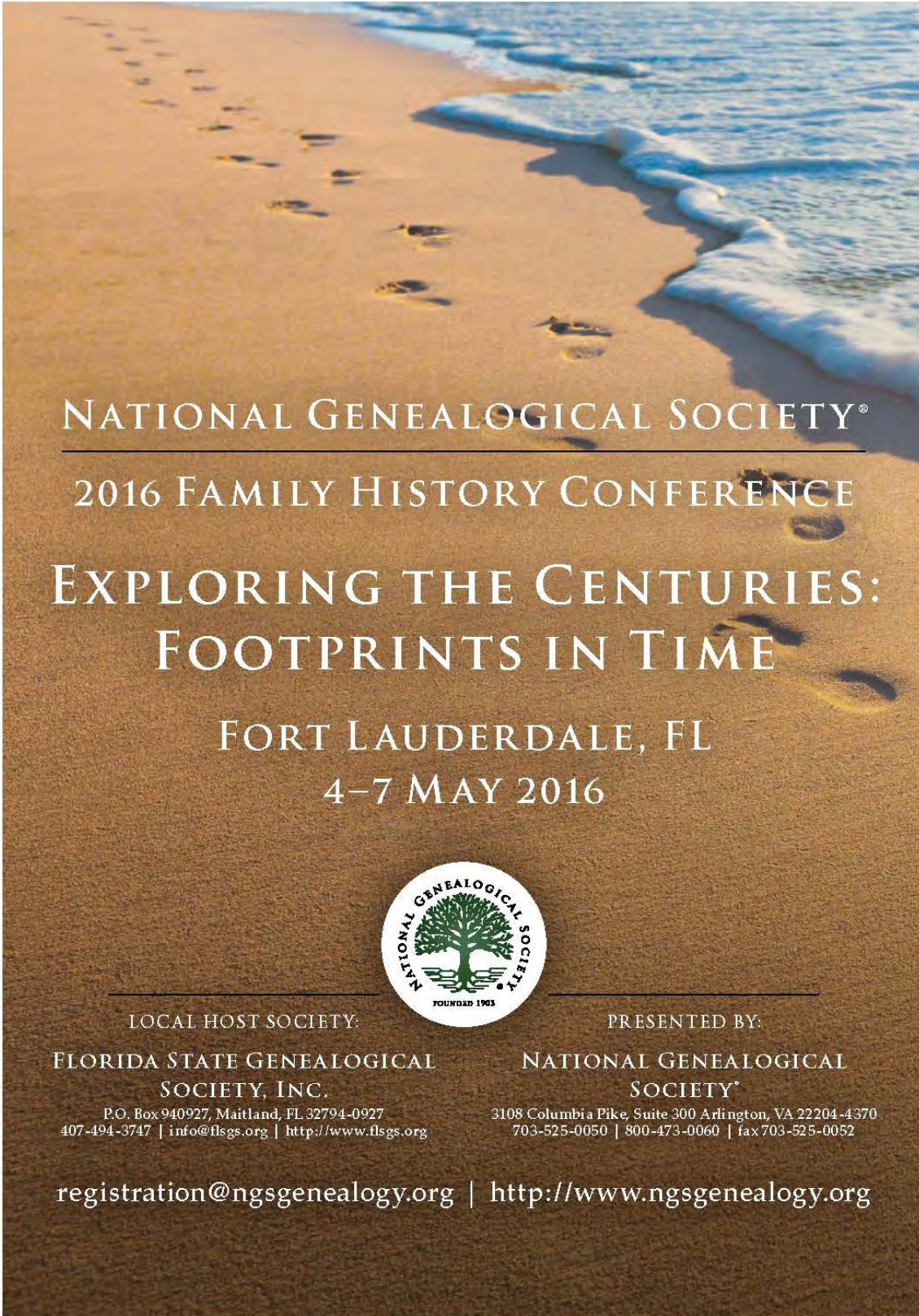
paragraph about the couple's background. Besides the interesting information about how they met on the boat that brought them to America and a chronology of their married life, the article listed the name of the village in Bavaria where Barney was born and the name of the state in Germany where Henrietta was born. I provided this information to a third cousin who is also researching the Hysinger family. Sometime later, while on a trip to Europe, he visited the town in Bavaria where Barney was born. While researching local records, he discovered the names of Barney's parents as well as the name of Barney's paternal grandfather, my 4th great-grandfather.

In summary, I believe the above examples illustrate an interesting aspect about genealogy research. In all of the items listed above, records existed that allowed me, once I knew where to look, to proceed back in time with my research. However, prior to breaking through the brick walls I did not know where to find these records.

What allowed me to locate these records was not what would normally be considered typical resources. In all the books and articles I have read about genealogy, I do not remember any mention of a service award in a company newspaper, a coroner's inquest or an article about a 50th wedding anniversary celebration as being sources of relevant genealogical information.

The lesson here is that there are countless sources which can provide vital clues that will allow a genealogist to break through a brick wall on a family line we are researching. Therefore, nothing should be overlooked or for that matter, thrown away or discarded.






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If you would like to join L-AGS, there are four different membership levels available. **"Individual"** memberships are for an individual person. When two people living at a single address wish to join, a **"Family"** membership is available to include a spouse or a household co-member. For those who wish to contribute additional funds to L-AGS, over and above the amount of an Individual or Family membership, **"Benefactor"** and **"Patron"** levels are available. *Benefactors & Patrons* are recognized in the *Roots Tracer* (our quarterly publication) for 1 year. The annual dues are due and payable on or before January 1st of each year. Those joining in October, November and December become members through the entire following year.

The IRS considers the benefits of L-AGS membership to be "insubstantial" for charitable deduction purposes. Therefore, subject to the recommendation of your tax advisor, the full amount of your dues can be claimed as a charitable contribution. (Section 501(c)(3)(public charity) of the Internal Revenue Code and California Taxation Code 2301g.)

Please complete the lower section of this form and mail it with your check, made payable to L-AGS, or bring with you to a general meeting. The Membership Chairperson can be reached for additional information at: membershipchair@l-ags.org

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Check the box if you want a printed, black & white copy of the *ROOTS TRACER* mailed to the address listed above. A "full color" version the *ROOTS TRACER* is available for download from our website.



G. R. O. W.

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

Compiled by Susan Johnston and Kay Speaks



Want to find more photograph collections? Search keywords **location** and **“digital library”**.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

How true! But the earliest existing photograph of people was taken circa 1838, and it's unlikely that we will find photographs of our ancestors pre-dating 1850. Still, it's possible, and it's even more likely that we might find photographs of our ancestors' homes, towns, and churches in online repositories. What about historical events? If your ancestor lived through the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, wouldn't you like to see pictures of the scenes he or she saw at the time? Perhaps this glimpse of online gems will give you some ideas.

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Photos, Prints, Drawings:

<http://www.loc.gov/photos/collections/>. This is your first stop when searching the Library of Congress' massive collection of photographs. Search by name, location, event, feature, or any combination. You might be pleasantly surprised. A photograph of an ancestor might exist.

National Child Labor Committee:

<http://tinyurl.com/3hnctc7>. Taken between 1908 and 1924, the more than 5,000 photographs in this collection document the working and living conditions of children in the U.S. at the time. Note that a surprising amount of biographical information on the children is included. Search by name, location, or industry.

Farm Security Administration:

<http://tinyurl.com/oc7cxpl>. The photographs of the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information date from the 1930s and 1940s. These are amazing photographs created by some of the best photographers of the time. Search by location, feature, or name. Yale's *Photogrammar* site provides an interactive way to explore these photographs. (See <http://photogrammar.yale.edu/>.)

Historic American Buildings Survey:

<http://tinyurl.com/corjlxq>. Don't neglect this little-publicized collection. Ancestral home, 18th century church, covered bridge photographs may be found here. Search by location, feature, or personal name.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY:

<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>. Although many New York-specific subjects can be found in the Digital Collections of the NYPL, the 300,000+ photographs are not limited to New York. In addition to New York City photographs dating back to the 1870s, investigate 19th century photographs from the Middle East, the “Billy Rose Theatre Collection,” and some amazing Ellis Island scenes and portraits (<http://tinyurl.com/qjkzwwz>).

FLICKR

Many of the world's most prestigious repositories host parts of their photographic collections on *Flickr*. Search for the repository name in the “People” search. Two example collections:

The Library of Congress on Flickr:

<http://tinyurl.com/owy5f4k>. The photographs are beautiful and the background information on each album includes a link to the larger collection on the LOC website. This provides a visual gateway to the most important LOC photograph collections.

The U.S. National Archives on Flickr:

<http://tinyurl.com/q3qp8mn>. The site's 16,000+ images include documents and posters, as well as photographs. Explore the DOCUMERICA albums and the two World War albums. There are 63 small albums focusing on Mathew Brady's photography. If these interest you, more than 6,000 images are available to search and view via the National Archives Catalog. Select the “Search within this series” button and search by location, event, or name (<http://tinyurl.com/o7fcbck>).

A WORD ABOUT COPYRIGHT

Before adding any of these beautiful photographs to your family narrative or genealogy database, you must investigate its copyright status. Are you free to use the image? Most of these example sites provide copyright and terms of use information, see “The Legal Genealogist” posts for general discussion: “Copyright and the photo negatives” (<http://tinyurl.com/pe3k65s>) and “Reprise: a terms of use primer” (<http://tinyurl.com/q817dec>).

Future General Meetings

Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton

Visitors are always welcome.

December 14, 7:30 p.m.

Stephen P. Morse

Case Study: Genealogy of Renee Kaufman

January 11, 7:30 p.m.

Ted Shapas

What To Do With All Those Photos

February 8, 7:30 p.m.

Richard Finn

Oak Knoll, Livermore

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