

Serving family history of the Livermore, Pleasanton and southeastern portion of Alameda County, in the beautiful San Francisco Bay Area of California



Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society P.O. Box 901, Livermore, California 94551

Web: <http://www.L-AGS.org>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Livermore.Amador.Genealogical.Society/>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1142643925760388/>

## HELP NEEDED!

### October 2024



#### ROOTS TRACER EDITOR

Our illustrious Roots Tracer Editor, Patrick Lofft, is retiring from the Roots Tracer at the end of the year. We need someone to come on-board asap to begin the transition. Have you wanted to learn publication and work with a publisher? Are you wanting to assist members in telling their stories? This may be your opportunity! We need YOU!

***While we work to find a new editor, this newsletter will feature articles by L-AGS members. In this issue, please read about life in Sicily and immigration to America.***

### Heritage Happenings

*Heritage Happenings, a L-AGS' semi-annual event at the Livermore Civic Center Library will be held on October 15 and 24 from 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.. Volunteers are needed to assist individuals in family research. To sign up to help, please visit:*

[www.L-AGS.org/tvhh](http://www.L-AGS.org/tvhh)

### General Meeting: The Picture Bride Era: The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 between U.S. and Japan

With: Linda Harms Okazaki

**Date:** Monday, October 14, 2024 7:00 p.m. (Zoom chat starts at 6:30 p.m.)

**Location:** Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Ct., Pleasanton, CA and via Zoom- Preregister via ZOOM below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYscOyrrD4pGdI88N7xDMAS1gextKvMAsJ6>

**Chair:** Program Chair, <mailto:program@L-AGS.org>

**Cost:** No Charge - Visitors welcome

**Details:** Please see page 2

## Other Special Interest Groups and Meetings

### Brickwalls

**Topic:** *Let's Chat is changing! You can come to chat about genealogy, but we are especially asking you to come with a brickwall or help with a brickwall.*

**Date:** October 20, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Contact Chair for the Link

**Chair:** Debbie Mascot,

<mailto:bulletin.manager@L-AGS.org>

### Board Meeting

**Date:** **NOTE CHANGE:** Tuesday, November 5, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Contact Chair for the Link

**Chair:** President, <mailto:President@L-AGS.org>

### The Master Genealogist Software

**Topic:** Database Management

**Date:** Friday, October 11 and Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Contact Chair for the link

**Chair:** Duncan Tanner,

<mailto:tvtmg.chair@L-AGS.org>



## General Meeting: The Picture Bride Era: The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 between U.S. and Japan With: Linda Harms Okazaki

The Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 was an agreement between the U.S. and Japan that restricted the immigration of Japanese laborers. Wives and children of laborers were permitted to immigrate. This led rise to what is informally called "The Picture Bride Era." Learn about the history leading up to this policy, how the agreement impacted immigrants, what records were created, and why the policy expired in 1924.

Linda Harms Okazaki is a fourth-generation Californian, active in the genealogy and Japanese American communities in California and beyond. She is passionate about teaching individuals of all ages to research, document, and share their personal family histories. Her research areas of interest include western states, upstate New York, England, Australia, and Japan, as well as the use of DNA in genealogy. Linda has been researching her husband's ancestry since 2012, documenting his family in the internment camps and in Japan. A charter member of the Nikkei Genealogical Society, she is also a featured columnist for the Nichi Bei Weekly; her column, Finding Your Nikkei Roots, is published bi-monthly. She is a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the Genealogical Speaker's Guild, and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

A past president of the California Genealogical Society, she has worked as a genealogy consultant for Densho and Ancestry's Progenealogists, and has presented at the Federation of Genealogical Societies, Jamboree, Legacy Family Tree Webinars, the National Genealogical Society, New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, and the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy. Ms. Okazaki holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Development and a Master of Arts degree in Education.

For additional information contact: Tom Mathews, Program Chairperson, email: [program@L-AGS.org](mailto:program@L-AGS.org)



**Date:** Monday, October 14, 2024  
7:00 p.m. (Zoom starts at 6:30 p.m.)  
**Location:** Congregation Beth Emek,  
3400 Nevada Ct., Pleasanton, CA and  
via Zoom- Preregister via ZOOM  
below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYscOyrrD4pGdl88N7xDMAS1gextKvMAsJ6>

**Chair:** Program Chair,  
<mailto:program@L-AGS.org>

**Cost:** No Charge - Visitors welcome

## Topics of Future General Meetings

| Month             | Topic   | Presenter          |
|-------------------|---|--------------------|
| November 11, 2024 | Bagging a Live One                            | Mary Kircher Roddy |
| December 9, 2024  | Comparing Plats of Land with Deeds and Grants | J. Mark Lowe       |

## Board Meeting Summary

### October 2024 Board Meeting Summary

*There will be Heritage Happenings at the Livermore Civic Center Library on October 15 and 24 from 2:00 – 5:00. Volunteers are needed to assist individuals in family research; sign up at [www.L-AGS.org/tvhh](http://www.L-AGS.org/tvhh).*

*We are still in need of a Roots Tracer editor (contact Julie Liu ([president@L-AGS.org](mailto:president@L-AGS.org)) if interested. In the meantime, Debbie Mascot, e-Bulletin manager, has agreed to add your stories to the bulletin. Send articles to Debbie at [bulletin.manager@l-ags.org](mailto:bulletin.manager@l-ags.org).*

*Members are welcome to attend Board Meetings (held by Zoom, usually on the 4th Tuesday of the month). Board meetings through the end of 2024 will be held on the first Tuesday of the month (November 5, and December 3). If you would like to attend the Board meeting, contact Julie Liu at [president@L-AGS.org](mailto:president@L-AGS.org).*

## Research Locations

### Livermore Family History Center

**Location:** 950 Mocho Street, Livermore, California

**Phone:** (925) 443-2750

**Web:** <https://locations.familysearch.org/en/us/ca/livermore/950-mocho-st?qp=Livermore%2C+California%2C+United+States&lat=37.68202&lng=-121.76837&r=50>

**Special Notes:** The entrance is in the front of the building on the right—there is a sign on the door. If the parking in front of the building is full, there is a large parking lot in the rear of the building.

### Pleasanton Genealogy Center

**Location:** 400 Old Bernal Avenue, Pleasanton, California

**Email:** [docents.chair@L-AGS.org](mailto:docents.chair@L-AGS.org) for appointment with docent

**Special Notes:** The Pleasanton Genealogy Center, jointly supported by L-AGS, the Friends of the Pleasanton Library, and the Pleasanton Public Library, contains the largest collection of genealogy books, CDs and online databases in the Tri-Valley. Access to Ancestry.com (Library-edition) and Heritage Quest (also available at home with your library card)

**Role**

President.....  
First VP and Program Chair.....  
Second VP & Membership Chair.  
Corresponding Secretary.....  
Recording Secretary.....  
Business Manager.....

**Name, Email**

Julie Liu, [president@L-AGS.org](mailto:president@L-AGS.org)  
Tom Mathews, [program@L-AGS.org](mailto:program@L-AGS.org)  
Denise Barr, [membership@L-AGS.org](mailto:membership@L-AGS.org)  
Penny Couser  
Susan Davis  
Duncan Tanner, [business.manager@L-AGS.org](mailto:business.manager@L-AGS.org)



**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME**

**Renew your  
Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society  
membership today!**

**Visit [L-AGS Membership](#) for more information.**

## Immigrants from Sicily to California

by Shirley Siems Terry

It's amazing how different the childhoods of some of our contemporaries are from our own. I recently found this out when I did an oral interview with my daughter-in-law's mother who I've known for over 30 years. I've been a guest in her California home many times and knew she was from Sicily. Many in their family still speak Sicilian which Rosa says is a dialect very different from regular Italian.

Rosa Hykal is nine years younger than I, so it was a shock for me to learn that before immigrating to America in 1956 at age eight, Rosa's family didn't have electricity until about 1955 nor plumbing. The kitchen in their four-room house had only a table and chairs. Meals were cooked with wood outside year-round. Rainwater from their flat roof drained into a cistern to be used for purposes other than drinking or cooking. When they finally got electricity, they had one bare bulb hanging over the table and otherwise used kerosene lanterns.

The interior of their house included a stable for four horses although they only owned one. One corner of the stable area had a grinding wheel for wheat which was operated by the horse going round and round. Another enclosed corner had a deep hole used as a toilet. Her father was a farmer and her maternal grandfather raised cattle and sheep, so they always had plenty to eat. Her father plowed his field with the horse he bought with money borrowed from an uncle, but the horse was stolen about four years before they left Sicily. Rosa's father was unable to farm without a horse so got a job laying the new pipeline bringing water to their area. Before that, the entire village of San Vito lo Capo had to carry their water from a central well in the middle of town. There was only one road in and out of their cove and the only car in the village belonged to a travel agent who drove them to the Palermo airport when they left Sicily. San Vito lo Capo, now a favorite tourist destination, has a beautiful white sand beach where you can wade knee-high into the Mediterranean.

It's easy to see why they wanted to join other family members who had immigrated to California. The immigration rules were much tighter in the 50's than they had been before WWII. Their required sponsorship was provided by Rosa's Aunt Jennie Napoli, sister of Rosa's father, Bartolo GRAZIANO. She had to prove she had \$10,000 to support Rosa's family of four if Bartolo couldn't find work. All this preparation took four long years. They had to bring medical records proving they were all in good health as well as proof of necessary vaccinations. Rosa remembers waiting at Ellis Island for their name and 'stall' number to be called. When Rosa's son visited Ellis Island several years ago, he was able to find their names, ages, hometown & country, ship, cabin number, arrival date, destination and sponsor written on the wall.

Our subject, Rosa Concheta Graziano, was born December 1947 in San Vito lo Capo, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy. Her paternal grandparents, Biagio Graziano & Rosa Catalano, left Sicily for America two days before her birth. Biagio and his son, Antonio, first immigrated to America in January 1920 and worked three or four years for C&H in Crockett, California. Did you know that the California and Hawaiian sugar refining business began in Crockett in 1906? Crockett is in Contra Costa County 29 miles from San Francisco. Rosa's only sibling, a brother, Gino, was born in 1952. In Sicily, Rosa and her cousins stopped by her maternal grandparents' house every day on the way home from school for a daily treat. Grandma "Nona" Napoli would give each of them a piece of homemade bread sprinkled with Grandpa's homemade wine and then dipped in sugar. I learned they never ate butter when I told her I had heard of sugar sprinkled on fresh baked bread and butter. They did have cows so drank milk and also used cow's milk for cheeses. Rosa calls her cousin Martina in Sicily several times a year.

Rosa's parents were married after World War II at ages 31 and 34. Rosa's father, Bartolo Graziano, had served in the Italian army during the war, been captured by the British and spent eight years in a British Prisoner of War camp in Ethiopia and released in 1944. His brother Antonio was also captured by the British in Italy. Because he had learned English while working with his father in California in the 1920's, they wanted to use him as a translator. He agreed if they could arrange for Bartolo to work in the prison kitchen.

The Allied invasion of Sicily, code named Operation Husky, July 9-August 17, 1943, was a major campaign in which the Allies took the island of Sicily from the Axis powers of Italy and Nazi Germany. Palermo was bombed and is only about 70 miles east of their village of San Vito lo Capo located on the northwest point of Sicily. Rosa's Mother's whole family lived in a cave for a year to escape the threat of bombing. While there, she and her youngest brother found a dead American who had been shot down. They retrieved his parachute and Annamaria used it to make her wedding dress. Just before leaving Sicily, she used the wedding dress to make a communion dress for Rosa. She insisted Rosa be confirmed an hour later because she wasn't sure Catholics in America were the same.

Rosa's aunt, Jennie Graziano, left Sicily in 1937 with her husband Vincent Napoli. They settled in Monterey, California, where Vincent was a fisherman and evidently owned his own boat, as he's listed as Captain on his American draft card. As mentioned earlier, the Sicilian dialect is much different than regular Italian. Rosa pointed out that Sicily is very close to Africa and both their language and food have been influenced by Arab cultures.

When the Graziano family immigrated to America in March 1956, they were on board the S.S. Andria Doria for nine days. As soon as the ship passed Gibraltar into the Atlantic Ocean, Rosa's mother got deathly seasick and spent seven days in bed. She had agreed to bring her three young nephews with them as their parents had recently settled in Los Angeles. The boys had their own cabin across the hall from the Grazianos. Since Rosa's Mother was sick, Rosa was left in charge of these three rascals under the age of eight, Vito, Joe and Girolomo Napoli. From New York, the seven boarded a train traveling through Chicago to Oakland, California, which took three days. Relatives picked them up in Oakland and drove them in two cars to Monterey. This family that had never been to a city, were amazed by all they saw in America, especially city lights. Remember, electricity had just come to their village.

Rosa had learned cursive handwriting and finished second grade before immigrating to Monterey, California in 1956. She was put back in second grade as she not only had to learn English but how to print. Even though her new classmates were mainly from Sicilian immigrant homes, they teased her unmercifully because she didn't know English or correct pronunciation. One day when she couldn't take the taunting any more, she went home during recess and told her Mother to "Pack up. We're going home." Her Mother sat her down and told her the reason they had come to America was so she and her brother could have a better life and reminded her that although their father had family in Monterey, her family was in Sicily except for them. Aunt Jennie took her back to school and explained the situation to the principal. He arranged for Rosa to have a tutor one hour a day for six months and, as he promised, by then she spoke perfect English. Her brother, Gino, learned English from playing with the neighborhood kids. Before she died in 2003, Rosa's mother reminded her of that conversation and pointed out what wonderful lives they all had in America. As a side note, Rosa and her husband have been on 32 cruises and visited Sicily 14 times. She took her children, Bryan and Annamaria, once when they were little.

Rosa's parents became US citizens in 1961. Their children did not have to take the citizenship test because they were taking American history in school, but Rosa remembers they each were asked separately to verify that they had no other parents anywhere. Her parents worked hard and within seven years were able to pay back what they had borrowed to make the journey plus enough to buy a house in Monterey. Rosa's Father, Bartolo, worked in Monterey canneries until the canneries started burning up. General Motors had NAFI (National Automotive Fibers, Inc.) making upholstery for their vehicles in Monterey and Bartolo went to work in their shipping department. Rosa's Mother worked sewing upholstery and later had a job sewing men's ties for another company. After retirement, they moved to Atwater, California, to be near Rosa's brother, Gino. When Rosa's husband retired from the airline industry, they also moved to Atwater.

## GRAZIANO FAMILY LINEAGE

Francesco Mattheu Giuseppe GRAZIANO

b. 1784

d. 1874

m. Grazia Antonia Rosalia PAGANO

Antonino Gaspare Vito GRAZIANO, Sr.

b. 29 May 1815 Sferracavallo, Palermo, Sicilia, Italy

d. 13 Dec 1886 San Vito Lo Capo, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy

m. (1) 22 Nov 1836 Palermo, Sicilia, Italy

Anna RUGGIRELLO 1820-1857

m. (2) 30 May 1858 San Vito Lo Capo, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy

Giovanna LaSALA

b. 1837

Biagio GRAZIANO

b. 15 Sep 1879 San Vito Lo Capo, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy

d. 26 Sep 1957 Monterey, Monterey, California, USA

m. 16 Oct 1905

Rosa CATALANO

b. 11 Jun 1885 Italy

d. 29 Jan 1966 Monterey, Monterey, California, USA

Bartolo GRAZIANO

b. 7 Jun 1913 San Vito Lo Capo, Trapani, Sicilia, Italy

d. 9 Nov 1996 Merced, California USA

m. 1945

Annamaria NAPOLI

b. 30 Jan 1916 Sicilia, Italy

d. 17 Sep 2003 Merced, California, USA

Rosa Concheta GRAZIANO