

# 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/>

## January 2025

*While we work to find a new editor, this newsletter will feature articles by L-AGS members. In this issue, see how Debbie Mascot begins tackling brickwalls.*



### 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!

### L-AGS Renewal

*It's time to renew your L-AGS membership! For only \$25 per year, you support the amazing monthly speakers, the events L-AGS hosts and participates in, and all the other great things that L-AGS does for the genealogical community. Renew now:*

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

### General Meeting: Finding Chinese Railroad Worker Files in the U.S.

**With: Grant Din**

**Date:** Monday, January 13, 2025 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/tZYsduiorjgsG9HuhQRKgaR5Nh3fb9Y91tW>

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

**Cost:** No Charge - Visitors welcome

**Details:** Please see page 2

## Other Special Interest Groups and Meetings

### NEW!---Fourth Friday Finds

**Topic:** *Genealogy Friends and Finds*

Join virtually to delve into family history stories, finds, and resources.

**Date:** Friday, January 24, 2025  
at 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Virtual via Zoom. Register here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/YjDAbRzeRaapUzEH3ud2uA>

**Chair:** Debbie Mascot,  
<mailto:bulletin.manager@L-AGS.org>

### Board Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, January 28, 2025  
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, January 3 and Saturday, January 25, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Contact Chair for the link

**Chair:** Duncan Tanner

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



## General Meeting: Finding Chinese Railroad Worker Files in the U.S.

### With: Grant Din

There is little documentation about Chinese railroad workers who built the Transcontinental and many other railroads in the U.S. starting in the 1860s. This webinar will describe some of the materials that do exist and other sources to use to learn more.

Grant Din has been interested in genealogy ever since a cousin told him forty years ago that he was in the 36th generation of Gongs! Since that time, he has researched his and many families' immigration histories including when he was on the staff of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. He has worked in the Bay Area nonprofit sector his entire adult life and has extensively volunteered his genealogical services. Grant moderates a Chinese American family history email group and has spoken at many libraries and genealogical societies. He completed Boston University's Certificate Program in Genealogical Research in 2015 and has traveled throughout the U.S., China, and Japan for his research and is a frequent presenter on Legacy Family Tree Webinars.

For additional information contact: Tom Mathews, Program Chairperson, email:

[program@L-AGS.org](mailto:program@L-AGS.org)



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

**Cost:** No Charge - Visitors welcome

Topics of Future General Meetings		
Month	Topic	Presenter
February 2025	Grandma Said What? Gathering and Verifying Your Family's Oral History	Sara Cochran
March 2025	Forget me not: The Story of a Milwaukee Pioneer	Jean Wilcox Hibben – PhD, MA

## Board Meeting Summary- December 3, 2024

Felicia Ziomek will be taking over the duties of Business Manager from Duncan Tanner. There are still some jobs that Duncan performed that are in need of a volunteer: updating the L-AGS website, maintaining the History Council email list, and leading the TMG group. Interested members should contact Julie Liu at [preident@L-AGS.org](mailto:preident@L-AGS.org).

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).

A thank you celebration for Duncan Tanner and Patrick Lofft will be held after the General Meeting on December 9. Members are encouraged to remain after the speaker to chat with Duncan and Patrick.

## 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  
Felicia Ziomek, [business.manager@L-AGS.org](mailto:business.manager@L-AGS.org)

## Brickwalls

By Deborah Conner Mascot

These days it isn't often that I spend time with my ancestors. When I do, I prefer to dive in and write about them, but every once in a while, I want to search and shake the leaves! Here are some of the tools I use and practices I follow when I encounter an ancestor that seems to have a brickwall as their profile background.

1. I put everything I know about them in a Word document or on a piece of paper. I look at this paper. What's missing? What's interesting? What do the dates tell me happened in their lifetime? What do the places tell me? I then log into my own version of a Family Group Sheet (you can find it here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/kbloqic0b0y32voocue2n/Research-Checklist.xls?rlkey=lezg994uxe1z0kj77ts7auj57&st=mrmtudoz&dl=0>).
2. Because I subscribe to Ancestry (US) I use it to look at my ancestor's profile (if it exists in my tree or add it if it doesn't). I make sure that all my facts are in there and I look at all the shaky leaves.
3. I then check off things on my own research checklist (second tab in my Family Group Sheet).
4. FamilySearch.org is my next visit. I see if I can fill in any blanks in my research based on the checklist.
5. Newspapers are my next visit- I use the following, depending on where they are located:
  - Genealogy Bank (paid)
  - Newspapers.com (paid)
  - California Digital Newspaper Collection (free)
  - Chronicling America (free)
6. I google. Just plain google to see what I can find.
7. I see if there is a Facebook page for where they lived. I look for posts on it about my ancestor or their family and I make a thoughtful post.
8. After I fill in my checklist, I see what's missing and target a spreadsheet at it. Do I need to see which John Smith is my John Smith in a certain town? Do I need to see where all the Browns lived in Chicago? I use whatever tools I need to in order to fill in my spreadsheet that will allow me to analyze the data.

Here is an example from today using my friend Louise Mariani. At one point in time, all I really knew is she never had children, was born around 1915 a Mariani (of Daniel Mariani, born in Switzerland), married a LaMuth, grew up in the Sunset District of San Francisco, and then lived on an ally with no drive-up to it forever. I've since found Louise and lost her (age 101), but I never learned much about her short-lived husband. I decided to start fresh with her and not even look up details of what I knew.

I wrote this down on a piece of paper and then started a family tree for her in Ancestry using as much of this as possible. It takes a bit for those leaves to show up, so I click search right away to see what pops up. I ignore Ancestry Trees. The first thing I see is California Birth Index, 1905-1995 with a Louise M Mariani. Mother is "Foster" and birth is 12 August 1914. A bit down is the 1930 census with this same birthday. This census shows her living on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue in San Francisco with her mom and two sisters, Laura and Catherine, and that her father was born in Switzerland. The names of her siblings sparked memories for me, too. I remember them visiting the Mariani Ranch where I grew up. I couldn't have TOLD you the names, but this is a big clue. Next, a quick Google Map search shows me that this is in the Sunset District of San Francisco.

I now can plug this date of birth into my new tree and log the 1930 census information. Then I can log the 1920 census where I learn her mother's name (Katherine Mariani, but we know her maiden name was Foster from the California Birth Records). Then the 1940 census where she is living with her sisters. I search for her in the 1950 census, but I don't find her in San Francisco. I make a note to look outside of San Francisco later. I now see there are some shaky leaves! What do they say? Well, what do you know? A link to a Louise La Muth in the 1950 census in San Francisco. I add this information to my tree, learning that John La Muth was her husband. Another shaky leaf is for a City Directory in 1958.

Clicking this tells me that she was a Bank of America teller at the time. This tracks, as I know Louise worked in banks most of her life. Again, I ignore the family trees. For now.

Because I want to study Louise's life and not go back further generations yet, I really want to know more about John. I know he wasn't around when I knew Louise in the 1970s and that they had been divorced after only being married a few years. So I move my focus in the tree to John La Muth and follow all the above steps to build what I know of him, starting with the 1950 census.

In this, he was born in Yugoslavia and a cook in a restaurant and Louise was a bookkeeper in a restaurant. He was 43 and she was 35. Looking at the 1940 census, he was married to a Gertrude and had a daughter, Mary Anne. Interesting. He's not in the 1930, census but is noted as being in the same house in 1935 in the 1940 census. Further shaky leaves find us with Find-A-Grave saying he was born 28 March 1907 in Sela, Yugoslavia which is now Slovenia. He died 4 Jun 1957 and was in the Navy in WWII, buried in the Golden Gate National Cemetery. Hmmmm.

I now have shaky leaves for John, but suddenly the system says unavailable for shaky leaves. I shrug and push the search button. Internment records show the widow as Theresa E. LaMuth. Perhaps wife #3? Let's focus on Marriage and Divorce records, but most of the records are pointing to Newspapers.com.

I switch to Familysearch.org. Here I find the San Francisco Marriage records. John and Gertrude Stuenkel were married 1 June 1933. John's parents were John Lamuth and Ana Panjan. Gertrude's were William Stuenkel and Ida Pulz. He registered for the draft on 16 Oct 1940 and Gertrude was listed as his spouse.

At some point he had to have served WWII in this time before John and Louise were married 27 June 1946, also the year he became a citizen and changed his name from Lamuth to La Muth.

Gertrude is found in the 1950 census married to William Reaves. Mary Lamuth is listed as daughter. William is a chef in a hotel and Gertrude is a "salad girl waitress". Now for the newspapers. 1942 in the San Francisco Examiner, Interlocutory Divorce Decrees Granted: Lamuth- Gertrude Vs. John. Not so juicy, but does let us know that he was divorced before he married Louise in 1946. I still can't find the divorce of John and Louise, but I know she spent some time in New York and Nevada. I will check there another time.

Did John go to war and Gertrude found someone else or did that happen sooner? Since William and John were both chefs, did they know each other? Did Louise know them all? The best way to sort through this is to make a chart of where they all lived and worked. San Francisco has some amazing city directories online, so I make a chart following John, Louise, William and Gertrude from 1930 to 1950. I never find William in San Francisco, but he has time in Monterey County before Gertrude and after. John and Louise are always in San Francisco. More questions than answers, but the more you know, the more you want to know!

At the very least, I found a plethora of information and then some holes that I can fine tune using my toolbox of genealogy tricks at a later date. Join us for our first Fourth Friday Finds and we can share tips and tricks for tackling those brickwalls.

## **NEW!---Fourth Friday Finds**

**Topic:** *Genealogy Friends and Finds*

Join virtually to delve into family history stories, finds, and resources.

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