

STANISLAUS RESEARCHER

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Message From President Bev Graham

If you missed the February meeting you missed some great soups and good conversation. The best soups were the free ones which, I believe, were all of them. Did anyone have more than four bowls?

I was disappointed that we didn't have our Cemetery Walk in February, but the weather didn't cooperate so now I'm looking forward to May when our next Walk is scheduled. I'm really looking forward to learning about some of the people buried there.

I hope the Board is doing all it can for you and this organization. We want to give everyone a really good reason to belong, attend, and bring friends. If you have a suggestion for the Board or you have an idea you'd like to see implemented, please let us know. If you are shy you can write it down on paper and give it to one of our greets, Nancy Grant or Nancy Robinson.

I love to write. It's a passion I've had since I was a little girl. Pansy Wilburn got me hooked on writing short stories about my ancestors and now I try to write a one page story on a particular ancestor every few days. I may be the only one in the family who knows the story so I should write it down for future generations. March is Writers Month and I'm going to try to persuade some of you to write. Would you

March Program

March 19, 2008 7:00 p.m.

This month's program is *Sand Canyon Station and the California Aqueduct* presented by Richard Hackney.

Sand Canyon, located on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada, was a crucial link in one of the 20th century's most difficult engineering feats—construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. When it was completed in 1913 the "Big Ditch," was the longest aqueduct in the Western Hemisphere. But the story did not end there. Patrolmen were needed up and down the aqueduct to inspect and protect it.

Sand Canyon Station offers a fascinating glimpse into the past, as told by Henry Schuette, whose father worked with William Mulholland in building the aqueduct, and by Lois Ramsey Carr, Robert Ramsey, and Litha Crowell Mattis whose fathers were aqueduct patrolmen in the 1930s and 1940s.

Using historic aqueduct footage, rare family photos, archival material and original photography, Sand Canyon Station allows us to peek into the past and:

- See the aqueduct being constructed.
- Learn how a disaster in Sand Canyon delayed the opening of the aqueduct for six months.
- Learn how the giant siphon works.
- Learn about the aqueduct patrolmen.
- See the neighboring community of Brown during its boom days.
- Experience life in Sand Canyon, complete with floods, earthquakes and primitive living conditions.

like to join the Writers' Group? We have so much fun listening to everyone's stories. Or, maybe you'd like to write for our newsletter? Remember, the newsletter is for the education and enjoyment of all members, and you can learn something simply by writing about it. If you have an article for the newsletter, or even just an idea, send editor, Susan Park, an email at pebfarms@yahoo.com

Program Report

By Vicky Wolff

What a great program we had at last month's general meeting! Thank you so much Sheila Ruiz Harrell for "Finding Juanita Bojorques – The Search for One Grandmother That Led to Seven Generations of Californio Ancestors." This was a wonderful program and very helpful to anyone researching their Hispanic ancestors. If anyone needs help with their Los Californios research Sheila would be honored to help you. Please visit her web site @ www.cafirstfamilies.net.

Meet Your Board

Each month this year we will present a short biography of one member of the Board of Directors. This month features 2nd Vice President Beverly Johnson.

If these Swedish words—pepparkakor, lingon, pannkakor, Dala hast, Sankta Lucia, kaffe, glogg, trolls, cardamom, mormor, morfor, formor, forfor, and lutfisk—make you think of me, you'd be right. I am the first grandchild of four Swedish immigrant grandparents who immigrated to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s. My mother was the third of three children and the first to be born in America. My dad was born ten years after his parents arrived in America. All of my grandparents settled in a Swedish neighborhood of Chicago, a hub of opportunity for immigrants. Swedes found community in the Lutheran religion of their native country and, as it happened, my mom and dad knew each other as children but "found each other" when they sang together in an All-Chicago Lutheran Choir in Soldier Field Stadium. Thus, my life began.

In my early years in Chicago we lived next door to my mother's parents. Saturdays were special for me. I spent the morning sharing and learning the art of baking bread and coffee cakes from my grandmother. Saturdays with my grandfather meant spending time in his immaculate basement where wooden shoes were used, and then into his garden—the joy of his life—where he painted the trunks of his apple trees white and he grew the biggest, most beautiful dahlias. His "troll stories" were always captivating, and bit by bit, through these young experiences, I learned of their story...leaving Sweden, the transatlantic crossing, and their Ellis Island experience.

In 1949 my dad's business transferred him from Chicago to Modesto. Starting as a fifth grader at Washington Elementary School, I went on to Modesto High School and MJC. I loved the school experience, as a journalist, musician, and athlete. I was inspired by some amazing teachers and chose to join their profession.

After graduating from Cal State, Fresno I spent one year teaching physical education at Turlock High School and then moved to Modesto High School. Then, five years into the Vietnam conflict, recalling the words of our President, "As not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," I ended up spending two years with the Peace Corps in Fortelez Ceara, Brazil doing community development work. Half of my 39 years in teaching was spent in physical education and coaching, followed by many years in the biological sciences—a nice avenue for my current interest in genetic genealogy.

Avid interests at this time include cooking for friends, a stroll over the golf course, and any live Broadway musical. I'm learning classical guitar and have a long ways to go with that. Travel is always high on my list. I've been to Scandinavia once and am looking forward to a return trip to Sweden with my brother and sister in the summer of '09. We'll visit relatives and do research on my dad's parents who don't seem to want to be found. And was my mother's father really a candidate for Primer Minister of Sweden as family lore suggests?

Carpe diem.

Pliny Fisk Gardner, Gunslinger of Hills Ferry

By Charlie Tieman

The most interesting query of 2007 came from a fellow researching gunmen named Gardner. He had noted in one of our local histories that someone named Gardner had a saloon and dance hall in hills Ferry named the Oasis and had "frequently shot up the town." He wanted to know more about this Gardner. Because of this query we ended up learning quite a bit more history of the West. I wrote up this story last year in the GSSC newsletter, but much of it never made it into print. It is interesting enough to warrant a more complete presentation here.

In the 1860s gold mining towns in Nevada from Carson City to Aurora, then part of California, were terrorized by gangs, the worst one being headed by John Daly, a hired gun working for one of the big mining companies. The violence was put up with as long as it only involved "ruffians" but after a local businessman was killed a Citizens' Safety Committee was formed and the gang members were rounded up. First arrest in Aurora were John Daly, Three-Fingered Jack, James "Massey" Masterson, Irish Tom Carberry, and Pliny Gardiner. The rest of the gang was soon tracked down by posses. Although these desperados were locked up, the Safety Committee didn't trust the usual course of justice and vigilantes took over the Aurora Jail. They declared martial law. The Governor called up troops from the nearest fort, but he was too late. On 8 February 1864 four of the gang were hanged. Pliny Gardiner was not one of them. Nothing is known of his fate.

By a strange coincidence, in the 1870 census we find a Pliny F. Gardner, aged 40, living here in Stanislaus County, near Empire, an affluent farmer and miner with \$8,000 worth of land. Then in 1880 Pliny is a saloon keeper in Hills Ferry living with three young ladies who are employed as dress maker, milliner, and shoe fitter!! Our voter registration rolls show that Pliny had previously registered in El Dorado County in 1868. When the railroad came down the west side in 1887 most of Hills Ferry moved over to the new town of Newman, but Pliny seems to have stayed in Hills Ferry for at least a few years more. He finally died in Newman in 1893 and his obituary described him as "a very scholarly man...engaged in the liquor business."

What do you think, was he the gunslinger of Aurora?

Seminar Opportunities

By Susan Park

The Sacramento German Genealogy Society is celebrating its 25th Anniversary with a two day party and seminar in April. The seminar will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. on Saturday, April 26 at La Sierra Community Center, 5426 Engle Rd., Carmichael. Cost is \$40 for non-members. Presenters are Marion Wolfert and Roger Minert. The party, billed as a "German Buffet Gala," is free to all who register for the seminar and will include food, a German band, folk dancers, and singing. For more information send email to Lorelei@softcom.net or call 916-421-8032 before April 19th.

Sonoma County Genealogical Society is hosting an all day seminar featuring Rhonda McClure, on Saturday April 26th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Wells Fargo Center for the Arts in Santa Rosa. Rhonda's topics are: *Getting the Most from Online Research; Newspapers: Finding the Buried Treasure; Old and New: Combining the Best of the Internet and Traditional Research; If I Knew Then What I Know Now*. To register for this seminar send your reservations to Registrar Audrey Phillips, 96 Eastside Circle, Petaluma, CA 94954-3609. Questions about registration can also be directed to her by phone at 707-763-4492.

Root Cellar—Sacramento Genealogical Society is putting on a specialized spring seminar this year featuring Geoff Rasmussen, one of the developers of the Legacy genealogical computer program. The seminar will be held on Saturday, March 29th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church in Fair Oaks. Cost for non-members is \$30. For more information contact Sammie Hudgens at (916) 481-4930 or Billie Helms at (916) 991-5971, or check their website at www.rootcellar.org.

Former *Stanislaus Researcher* editor, David Wolff will be the guest speaker at the March meeting of the Merced Genealogical Society. His topic is the Family Tree Maker genealogy software program.

Armchair Genealogy

By Susan Park

Although most of us probably feel pretty comfortable working with census records, there is always more we can learn. At the Minnesota Population Center's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) website (<http://usa.ipums.org/usa>) you will find answers to everything you wanted to know about the US Federal Census and a whole lot more that you probably never even thought about before. At this website you'll find a detailed history of the census process from 1790 through 2000. You'll learn how and why supervisor districts and enumeration districts were created. You'll find out how supervisors and enumerators were selected; originally they were appointed but later applicant testing was required.

There is a whole section that explains in great detail the instructions given to the Marshals, Assistant Marshals, and Enumerators before they set out to count heads, for the years 1850-1950. This can be helpful when considering the occupation columns. For example, in the 1880 instructions enumerators are cautioned to, "Take especial pains to avoid unmeaning terms, or such as are too general to convey a definite idea of the occupation. Call no man a 'factory hand,' or a 'mill operative.' State the kind of a mill or factory. The better form of expression would be, 'Works in a cotton mill,' 'Works in paper mill,' etc." In the same set of instructions enumerators are also told the "Use the word 'huckster' in all cases where it applies." In the 1890 instructions enumerators were given specific instructions on categorizing various racial groups. In the 1910 instructions there is a detailed description of what an employee is and what "working on own account" means.

The primary purpose of IPUMS-USA is to collect, analyze, and distribute US census data. The website is full of informative analysis and it is free.

Memorial Day Weekend

by Vicky Wolff

Mark your calendars for Memorial Day weekend. We will again be hosting our booth at the Cemetery to help people find their loved ones' graves. We are looking for people in our membership to help out in the booth, Saturday May 25th, Sunday May 26th and Memorial Day, Monday, May 27th. Please call Vicky Wolff at 529-9430 if you would like to volunteer to help. Morning hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to noon

and afternoons from noon until 3:00 p.m.. We always have a great time of fellowship and getting to know our society members a little better. So, please plan to volunteer and remember to bring your lunch and a lawn chair. Be prepared to have fun and be blessed for helping others locate their loved ones' graves.

Ancestors' Stories

The Stanislaus Researcher is happy to publish short stories of our members' ancestors. If you would like to share one of yours send an email to Susan Park, editor at pebfarms@yahoo.com or send it through the US mail to GSSC, P. O. Box A, Modesto, CA 95352-3660. The following story was submitted by Beverly Graham.

Matthew Brayton 1817 – 1862

On September 20, 1825 Matthew Brayton liked tagging along after his older brother, William, in search of cattle. Being seven years old, Matthew always liked going into the woods. He would find little squirrels, snakes, and insects. He never found any cattle on his own but when William found them, Matthew would help bring them home. Matthew was happy there were no fences to keep cattle from moving about. If they had fences there wouldn't be any reason to go into the woods and he wouldn't be able to play his games and search for treasures.

This day was like any other except while in the woods they ran into their neighbor, Hart Baker. Hart was on the same errand as the boys so he suggested that Matthew go to his house and wait while he and William looked for the cattle. Matthew headed off in the direction of the Baker cabin and looked forward to playing with the five Baker children when he got there.

As he started toward the Baker home Matthew soon found his sense of direction wasn't what he thought it was. Had he left the trail by accident, or had he not followed the logs like should have? Was he lost? How many times had he circled around? Growing more afraid, Matthew started to cry. As he walked along the broken trail he found himself in the thicket of the woods. He grew more afraid with each step. He had lost his brother, lost the trail, and was nowhere near the Baker house. Where was he? Panic mounting, scared and frightened, Matthew sobbed.

Hearing something behind him, Matthew stopped and turned. As he wiped his tears he tried to see what was coming toward him. Maybe it was William and he had just walked in a circle. Or maybe it was the Baker children and he had only thought he was lost. Suddenly, he saw the source of the noise. An Indian on horseback was galloping toward him. He had heavy buckskins on his legs and wore a cape of leather adorned with feathers. Matthew tried to run but his legs were stuck to the ground and he couldn't move. Frozen, he could only stare, wide-eyed, at the huge savage. The Indian reached down and grabbed Matthew's arm, pulling him up onto the horse and signaling for Matthew to sit behind him on the blanket. Too frightened to cry, too frightened to talk, Matthew just stared at the Indian's back and hung on for dear life. The Indian rode in the opposite direction of Matthew's home. Looking behind him, Matthew realized he was seeing the last of the life he had known. He was leaving the Ohio Valley forever.

Matthew was taken to the village of the Canadian Indians. From there he was sold to the Paw Paws, the Winnebagos, the Sioux, and finally, to the Snakes. He spent five years in the company of the Sioux, fighting against the Blackfeet. Then he was sold to the Snakes where he met and married his wife. They had two daughters, Tefronia and Qululoe. After traveling the west for 34 years as an Indian, he was found in the state of New York in 1859. Hearing of the returned captive, William Brayton was sent to return his brother to Ohio. Everything about Matthew matched. Scars he had gotten as a child were matched up. He

was definitely Matthew Brayton. His Indian name was Ohwa-owah-kish-me-wah. By the time he was an adult Matthew had forgotten his own name and could barely speak English. He was an Indian by all accounts. He was no longer the child of the Braytons, but a stranger. Shortly after his return to Ohio, Matthew was sent back to New York. He joined the Union Army in 1860 and fought as a Union soldier. In April 1862 he was killed in the Battle of Pittsburg Landing in Southwestern Tennessee.

This space could be filled with your article.



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