

# STANISLAUS RESEARCHER

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

May 2008

Volume 30, Number 5

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## Message From President Bev Graham

What a great month this has been! Our workshop, coordinated by Bev Johnson, was a huge success. If you missed it, you missed a good deal of great information. The classes were informative and had really good speakers. Maybe next time year we can have some of them back for another round of information.

May is a big month for us. The Salt Lake City group will be off in search of ancestors, and I'm sure they'll return with stories of diligent searches and lucky finds. The annual Yard Sale will be held May 2nd and 3rd at the home of David and Vicky Wolff. They will also be heading to the cemetery on Memorial Day to help those looking for ancestors. We'll also have our first Cemetery Walk, led by Millie Starr, which should be fun and informative. I know Millie has some surprises in store so this is a don't-miss event.

Dick Freudenthal will be representing us in the 4th of July parade. He'll be waving to us from...a horse, car, golf cart, wagon, or who knows what?. Come to the parade and find out which it is.

## May Program

May 20, 2008 7:00 p.m.

You will be in for a treat with our May program. You'll hear the bag pipes played and have the presenters dressed in kilts in celebration of the St. Andrews Society and Scottish heritage.

You'll learn about the St. Andrews Society and about researching your Scottish ancestors, as well as what it was like in Scotland when your ancestors were there. There is rich history in the land of Scotland. This will be a wonderful program and you won't want to miss it!

## YARD SALE REMINDER

The yard sale will be at David and Vicky Wolff's home at 2025 Vista Drive and runs from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday and Saturday, May 2nd and 3rd.

Donations may be brought by until 3 p.m. Thursday, May 1st. BE SURE TO CALL FIRST. 209-529-9430.

Donated clothes must be cleaned, pressed and on hangers. Books, records, small appliances, linens, lamps, furniture knick-knacks and collectables are all great! We can use all donations and need donations, so please support the yard sale anyway you can.

Further into summer we have a chance for a bbq at a Modesto Nuts game in August. This is right up my alley. Talk, eat, visit, and no dishes to wash! What a treat! And all for only \$19 per person, including the ball game. Details still need to be worked out, so stay tuned.

In September we'll be celebrating our 40th birthday. I can hear some of you now, "I can't believe it's been 40 years!" We'll be planning a few extra special treats, including a look back at the 1960s when the group was founded. Do you still have your peace beads, tie-dyed shirts, and mini-skirts? I know, most of you didn't wear such things, but your President did!

I hope we're meeting your needs with these upcoming events. If you want to volunteer for anything, or have other ideas, we can always use your help. Don't be shy. Finally, we are trying to get through with the business part of our meetings quickly, leaving more time to enjoy the speaker and still get us home at a decent hour. Until next month, when we all get together again, I'll be right here, searching for ancestors.

### **Meet Your Board**

*Each month this year we will present a short biography of one member of the Board of Directors. This month features Treasurer, Theo Schock.*

#### **How It All Started**

*By Theo Schock*

My name is Theo (Theodora) Schock and I am the Treasurer of the Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County. My devotion to family history began with my high school graduation when my grandfather's first cousin gave a unique gift—my lineage back to my great-great grandfather, John R. Keeler, a Revolutionary War soldier. I had never met this lady before but she came all the way from Sacramento, especially to give me the papers outlining the history, along with two cups and saucers my great-grandmother had brought from Pennsylvania to Nevada by stagecoach in the 1870s. Little did I know then how that gift would start me on a life long search for family.

My interest in family history has turned me into the receiver of family treasures. I've accumulated crystal vases from a great-grandmother on my mother's side, oval picture frames and pictures of my father-in-law, pictures of my mother at age two, pictures of my husband when he was four, my great-grandmother's silver sewing scissors, and so on.

I have many questions for my father, but he passed away in 1980. My mother is still living and in our conversations I recently learned that my dad's parents lived out on Scenic Avenue in the late 1920s or 1930s. Now I need to go to the Recorder's Office and look up land records to map just where my family lived. I am never bored when searching for an elusive member of the family.

I worked in a public library all my working years. I finally went back to school at age 42 to earn my BA and then went to UC Berkeley to get my Master's Degree in Library Science. And, yes, I was born in Modesto, went to Modesto High School, Modesto Junior College, and Stanislaus State. I was married here and we have two beautiful daughters and seven grandchildren.

### **Queries**

*By Charlie Tieman*

We received eight queries in March. The only one of historical interest asked about a relative, David Holland, who was listed as an inmate of the old Stanislaus County Hospital and Alms House in the 1910 census. The question was whether he was there as a patient? None of those records seem to have survived and we have no way now to know his status there, a medical patient or an indigent resident.

Also requested were obituaries for Annie Law Sipes, Edna Cheary, and Virgil Mott of Modesto. Similar requests asked about William, Anna, and Charles Albro of Modesto, Robert Moon of Oakdale, and Ida Giles of Turlock. Another correspondent asked for general information on Catherine Banbury who married Edward Hunsucker of Modesto and Stockton. Yet another set of queries came in for a Ford family of Modesto, this time a John Ford. This long series of queries seems to have ended with my suggestion that the seeker might consider making a donation to our society.

### **Local Sources: Dale Road Family History Center**

*By Susan Park*

While some of our members are lucky enough to make the trip to Salt Lake City each year to do research in the Family History Library, all of us can take advantage of those resources at local Family History Centers. In Stanislaus County we have three—Turlock, El Vista on the east side of Modesto, and Dale Road in northwest Modesto.

I hadn't been to the Dale Road facility for many, many years so this month I stopped in a couple of times to see what's changed and what's available for local researchers. On my first visit I had a wonderful tour given by Directors Dean and Anita Anderson, who brought me up to date. The hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The FHC is closed in the evening on the 4th Thursday of each month for staff training. Including the Directors, there are about 18 volunteers who staff the Center. Usually two volunteers man each shift.

As far as holdings go, there are five pretty good sized book cases filled with books and periodicals, and, of course, lots and lots of microfilm and microfiche. There are over 1,700 rolls of film on permanent loan at this facility. I was amazed at the amount of computers available. Fifteen years ago there was one. Today there are seven computers, one scanner, and two printers. There are still four big film readers (probably the same ones I used so long ago), two fiche readers, and a digital fiche/film printer. If you need a film that isn't already on-site, you can rent it for 30 days from Salt Lake City for \$6.00.

The computers were the most fun. The internet is available for genealogical purposes and there are links to take you to practically all of the major websites. Heritage Quest, Footnote.com, Godfrey Memorial Library, World Vital Records, and some others are all available at no charge. In addition to that, they have the latest version of PAF and even a version of Legacy Family Tree. Although Ancestry.com isn't on their computers any more, if you have your own subscription you're welcome to log on and use it all you want.

All in all, this is a wonderful Family History Center. It's beautifully organized, the equipment is pretty new, the staff is friendly and helpful, and the atmosphere is tranquil and conducive to serious research. What more could a genealogist want?

### **Special Collections Room, Stanislaus County Library**

*By Susan Park*

The Special Collections Room at the Stanislaus County Library, downtown branch, houses a very large number of genealogical books and periodicals. It is located at the back of the library, past the reference desk and beyond all the computers. A very nice thing about it is that it has a heavy, noise-dampening door. Check in at the periodical counter to gain admittance. On Mondays the room is staffed with at least one GSSC volunteer, sometimes more, between 10 a.m. and 3p.m. Our Society has donated three new

books to the Special Collections Room this year. These new volumes will be on the shelves any minute now. To pique your interest in these new works here is some information about each of them.

*Transcription of Provincial North Carolina Wills, 1663-1729/30. Volume Two. Testators L – Z.* Compiled by John Anderson Brayton. Volume One of this two volume set is already on the shelf in the Special Collections Room. The following information is taken, in part, from a review of the series found at [www.genealogical.com](http://www.genealogical.com): These wills are part of the North Carolina Secretary of State papers and they encompass the entire period before North Carolina became a royal colony. The wills are arranged in alphabetical order and are fully transcribed—not abstracted—so that all the detail (names, relationships, disposition of property, etc.) is available in the book. Each volume contains a complete name index, a separate slave index, and a location index. Volume Two contains quite a few corrections to Volume One and a few wills that were discovered after Volume One was printed. In reading the introduction and other front matter of Volume Two, it was apparent that Mr. Brayton loves his work. He writes clearly and with a touch of humor, acknowledging that regular people (those who think genealogists study rocks, for example) may find his choice of occupation a little off-beat. Those of you who have early North Carolinians in your background may find the solution to one of your genealogical mysteries in this series.

*Everton's Handybook for Genealogists 11th Edition.* Those of you who've been chasing your ancestors for at least a couple of decades will surely be familiar with the *Handybook*. Back in the pre-internet days it was indispensable for figuring out where to write for vital records and other documents. All the addresses and phone numbers were in one place. I hadn't looked at it for many years and was surprised at how much weight it had put on! This new tome works as an atlas, a history book, address book (postal and URLs), and comprehensive guide to family research in the States. There are full color maps of the states and their counties. There is a tracker to detail boundary changes over the years and over 120 migration trail maps to help you follow your ancestors. The *Handybook* also includes lengthy bibliographies covering the following categories: general; atlases and gazetteers; census; probate, wills, and other court records; migration and naturalization records, land and property records; military; and vital and cemetery records. In today's all-internet world there is still a need for this type of guide. If you haven't used the *Handybook* in a while, stop by the Special Collections Room and have a look at the latest version.

*The Great Migration Immigrants to New England, 1634-1635, Volume V: M-P,* by Robert Charles Anderson. This is the fifth volume of the second series of Great Migration publications. About 1300 individuals and families are known to have come to New England in 1634 and 1635. The sketches in these volumes include such things as occupation, education, political offices held, along with the usual genealogical information. You can read more about the project at [www.greatmigration.org](http://www.greatmigration.org). On their website are some quotes about Robert Anderson's works, including this one:

These volumes, as will future additions, offer a critical summary of a vast body of genealogical works and also act as a valuable guide to the published and unpublished sources on early New England....A section at the end of each sketch entitled "Comments" addresses matters that do not fit into the usual format. These comments are invariably interesting, in part because of Anderson's sense of humor and skill as a writer....This reference work fulfills a far broader mission than the purely genealogical. It is a must-buy for libraries and is highly recommended for teachers. I urge my colleagues in colonial history to take a peek, but be warned: the sketches are addictive.—  
Gloria L. Main, University of Colorado at Boulder, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, October 1997.

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**Online Resources: LibraryThing.com**

*By Susan Park*

Have you found LibraryThing.com yet? I first saw it mentioned about two years ago in the National Genealogical Society's magazine. I signed up immediately, but didn't begin using it in earnest until recently.

LibraryThing.com is the easiest way ever to catalog the books in your library. You enter books by typing in the title, the ISBN number, or some other easy to find piece of information. Usually the title is enough. LibraryThing will find the book and usually show a picture of the cover. If there are multiple versions or similarly titled books you may need to scroll down a bit to find the exact one you own. If you manage to own a book that cannot be found in one of the over 600 book databases, you can always enter the book's information manually. Most of the books I've entered were easily found via the Library of Congress.

In addition to providing an easy way to keep track of your own books, the site also functions as a social space, connecting people with similar libraries and interests. There are hundreds of "groups" that have formed online. Some specialize in particular authors, subjects, or genres and are public. There are currently 14 groups devoted to genealogy. There are also private groups for families, churches, book clubs, and so on.

Over 375,000 users from around the world have already catalogued over 24 million books from their personal libraries. A free account lets you catalog up to 200 books. Over that limit requires you to pay \$10 per year or \$25 for a lifetime account. Who knew cataloging books could be so easy, and free too? I urge you all to give it a try.

**Online Resources: Using Online Records**

*By Joann MacDonald*

A few months back I read an article in our Society's newsletter that some of the City Directories for Los Angeles were online. I check the site out and it broke down a brick wall that I had been up against for some time. This is my story of Catherine MacDonald Murphy which unfolded only after I looked for her in the City Directories.

I knew from the 1930 California census that Catherine was living in Los Angeles and that she was a widow. The street address was unreadable. I used the City Directory and there were several ladies named Catherine Murphy. Once I had street names from the City Directory I could make out the streets on the census records. There was a Catherine who lived at 184 East 49th Street which matched with the census record. I checked other years and felt like I had hit the jackpot when the 1936 City Directory said she was the widow of George M. Murphy. In the obituary of Catherine's father she was referred to as Mrs. George Murphy of Boston.

I looked very closely at the online census record. Most of the people owned their homes. Catherine was head of household and lived alone. The next name down was Marie Sieble. She lived at 186 East 49th Street. She rented and was divorced. This Marie was born in Massachusetts. I wondered if she could be Catherine's daughter. She was of the right age. I went to the online California Death Index, tried the name Marie Sieble, and hit another brick wall as there was no listing for a person by that name. But I wasn't going to give up yet! I left both names blank and searched on father's name Murphy and mother's name MacDonald. I got a hit. The lady's name was Marie Agnes Sheehan and she had been born in Massachusetts in October 1894. I went back to the census record and she was of the right age to be the Marie Sieble in the census. But, when did she become Marie Sheehan, assuming they were the same

person? I went back to the City Directories and found a Marie Sheehan living at 186 East 49th Street. I felt confident then that the two names belonged to a single person.

I went down to the Stanislaus County Library and looked for an obituary for Marie Sheehan in the Los Angeles Times. I was lucky and found one. It listed her son as Edward Siebke. The census taker had spelled the last name incorrectly. I went to the online California birth records, put in Siebke as the surname and Murphy for the mother's maiden name, and came up with Edward Siebke, born in 1919. I then went back to the census records and found Marie in 1920 with husband, Alfred H. Siebke and son Edward! I checked the City Directory again for the name Siebke and there she was, living with her husband Alfred at 186 East 49th Street. Sometime before 1930 she divorced Alfred and by 1930 he had remarried. Marie was married John J. Sheehan by about 1935. And finally, using the City Directories I discovered that both of Marie's husbands had been employed by the same company—Alfred Siebke as a district manager, and John Sheehan as a salesman.

*Joann's online search for her ancestors will be continued next month.*

## What's in Your Library?

*By Susan Park*

We all have accumulated a lot of genealogical reading material. Every time I attend a seminar I'm tempted with vendor tables full of "must have" books, and reading the ads of some of the big name publishers often causes me to reach for the credit card. Eventually my entire library will be posted on [www.LibraryThing.com](http://www.LibraryThing.com) for all to see. If you have favorite books you'd like to share with other GSSC members, or you've recently read something spectacular you think others ought to know about, just send me an email, or even an old-fashioned letter, and I'll make sure it's shared in the newsletter. In the meantime, here are a dozen books I can share and use for look-ups.

- *War of 1812: Virginia Bounty Land & Pension Applicants* by Patrick G. Wardell
- *Culpeper County Marriages, 1780-1853* by John Vogt & T. William Kethley, Jr.
- *Fauquier County, Virginia Guardian Bonds 1759-1871* by John K. Gott
- *Fauquier County, Virginia Marriage Bonds: 1759-1854 and Marriage Returns: 1785-1848* by John Gott
- *Fauquier County, Virginia Deeds 1759-1778* by John Gott
- *History of Mercer County, Illinois 1882-1976* by Daniel Johnson
- *Prairie Pioneers of Illinois, Vol. I* by Illinois State Genealogical Society
- *Past and Present of Mercer County, Illinois, Vols. I, II* originally printed in 1914. Full of biographies.
- *Switzerland County, Indiana Cemetery Inscriptions 1817-1985* by Wanda Morford
- *Phillips County, Kansas, Settlers Prior to 1900* by Phillips County Genealogical Society
- *Epitaphs & Inscriptions of Phillips County, Kansas* by Phillips County Genealogical Society
- *The Un-Covered Wagon* by Alma Taylor-Lauder Keeling. Covers early days of Moscow, Idaho.

## Cemetery Walk: A Walk Down Memory Lane

*By Millie Starr*

The Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County and the Modesto Citizens Cemetery will have at first in the merry month May. We are inviting our members and friends to a walk in the cemetery. On May 29th at 6:00 p.m. we will take our first Walk Down Memory Lane. On this walk of about an hour and a quarter we will meet some of the first citizens of Modesto and learn a bit about their lives, some long and some

short. Wear your walking shoes. Come to the Modesto Citizens Cemetery on Scenic Drive. Enter on Cedar, off Bodem, and follow the arrows to meet at the little white office building. This is a free event.

### **Report on GSSC Workshop**

*By Beverly Johnson*

The Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County hosted its spring workshop, “Blossom and Leaf Out In Your Genealogy Growth” on April 19th at the LDS Church on El Vista Avenue in Modesto with 39 individuals participating.

Two sessions were offered in the morning and two more sessions in the afternoon. Within each session, four workshop topics were offered to participants.

Topics offered and presenters included:

- “Timelines” by Vicky Wolff
- “Organizing Your Research” by Vicky Wolff
- “More Research Techniques Into California Hispanic Heritage” by Sheila Ruiz Harrell
- “Beginning Family Tree” by David Wolff
- “I Am NOT Descended from Charlemagne-European Genealogy for the Rest of Us” by Jim Shuman
- “Bring Your Ancestors Back to Life” by Joann MacDonald
- “The Civil War and Your Research” by Jeff Wells
- “The ABC’s of the Biology of DNA” by Bev Johnson

Although we may have wished for more quantity in terms of numbers of participants, there was no lack of quality. I appreciated the large number of evaluation responses which were 100% positive. I am especially thankful to our own members, Vicky Wolff, David Wolff, Joann MacDonald, and Jeff Wells who were willing to share their expertise. A wonderful outcome was their response, “This was fun and I so enjoyed doing it.” and for myself, as well. There is a wealth of talent and knowledge within our Society. How great it is to tap into “our very own.”

As members, we all have our special interests. If you enjoy the Workshops, tell us what topics you would like to see included next year. Email me: [jbevjohnson1@aol.com](mailto:jbevjohnson1@aol.com). Look for information about our Fall Seminar in next month’s newsletter.

### **Report on Regional Seminar**

*By Susan Park*

On Saturday, March 29th I attended the Root Cellar Seminar up in Sacramento where the sole presenter was Geoff Rasmussen, of Millenia Corporation, the producers of Legacy Family Tree. Since I’m a Legacy user I knew the 90 minute drive would be worth the effort, but even now, weeks later, my head is still swimming with all the wonderful ideas he presented. The Root Cellar group deserves the highest marks for their conference organizing abilities. From check-in, to vendor sales, seating, the catered lunch, and door prizes—the whole day was perfect. Geoff presented four different topics that day, useful to all genealogists, not just Legacy users. If you have an opportunity to hear him in the future be sure to book early. He’s quite popular and entertaining.

The first session was devoted to digital images. After a brief overview of the technical jargon (jpeg, dpi, tiff, pixels, etc.) he showed us a lot of easy to use editing tips and tricks using Adobe Photoshop Elements. We learned how to clean up old photos, fix color problems, make pictures lighter or darker, and

a lot of other useful things. He explained how to add a citation of a digital document by adding a margin around the picture using photo editing software. The full citation of the document can be entered in that margin and will always be visible each time the image is distributed to other researchers.

Session Two focused on timelines and chronologies. Examples of timeline software were discussed. He talked about *Personal Historian*, a program used primarily for writing personal histories ([www.personalhistorian.com](http://www.personalhistorian.com)) and *OurTimelines* ([www.ourtimelines.com](http://www.ourtimelines.com)) which will allow you to produce a personalized timeline for you. All looked like fun. Right after lunch we spent time on the general topic of research guidance. I learned a lot about familysearch.org and labs.familysearch.org which will appear in a future issue. The final session of the day was devoted to Legacy and a preview of the long-awaited upgrade to Version 7. We were all ooohing and aaahhing over what's coming soon, and I dreamed about genealogy software all night long when I got home.

If you haven't ventured outside your local jurisdiction for a seminar, I urge you to take the plunge this year! If you can attend a regional seminar featuring professional speakers with a national presence, the genealogical lobe in your brain will be greatly expanded. Don't worry, your non-genealogical friends won't notice, but your fellow researchers will be impressed by the depth of your knowledge.

### **Memorial Day Weekend at the Cemetery**

**May 24—26, 2008**

*By Vicky Wolff*

There is still time to volunteer to help at the cemetery booth. If you would like to help the community in finding loved ones' graves please call me at 209-529-9430 or email me at [decorator4@sbcglobal.net](mailto:decorator4@sbcglobal.net) and I'll gladly give you a time slot to fill. We always have a great time of fellowship with other GSSC members and it is always gratifying to find loved ones' graves. So, come and join us this Memorial Day Weekend. We would love to meet and greet you!

### **Betty Bradley**

**November 16, 1928 – April 7, 2008**

Betty Jean Bumgardner Bradley was born in 1928 in Modesto. She lived all her life in the Modesto area, attending Modesto High School and graduating in 1947. She joined the Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County in 1979 and was Member #7. She served as President in 1983. She was a wonderful friend to all of us in the Society and did much to help researchers. She served on the Records Commission, working to preserve County records for the use of historians and family historians alike. She helped on many committees, spoke at workshops, and generally was the ideal member. Betty will be missed, not only for all that she did, but for who she was.





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