

# STANISLAUS RESEARCHER

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

August 2008

Volume 30, Number 7

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## Happy Birthday to Us! We are 40 and Counting....

*By Pansylea Howard Willburn*

The year was 1968, and the place was Stanislaus County. Life in Modesto was very different then, especially for someone interested in genealogical research. Modesto still has that “little town” feeling. Our library was where the McHenry Museum is now, and the staff was wonderful but there were few books helpful to a genealogist. Rental microfilm, from far-away places, was available, but it was almost impossible to find a microfilm reader. It was before we had personal computers with the explosion of information on the Internet and easy correspondence by e-mail. We did have Xerox, but copies tended to turn black or fade quickly. And DNA was definitely not a common topic of conversation. None of this kept some of us from active genealogical research, but it was often a lonely occupation.

In 1968 there were only a few of us in Stanislaus County doing research on our families. When we did meet each other it was generally by accident or because we had placed ads in and subscribed to genealogical publications away from Modesto and met each other that way. I knew three genealogists in the county—one of whom I met at church because he gave long monologues on his ancestors to anyone who would listen, one through an ad in the *Genealogical Helper*, and one who just turned up at my front door. I was absolutely thrilled to meet others who spoke my language!

## August Program

August 19, 2008 7:00 p.m.

This month's program features Chief Mike Lenahan and Helen Moore of the Irish Cultural Society. They will talk about Ireland and share with us some of the activities of their group. We also hope to learn something about Irish research techniques.

## Upcoming Events

August 21	Modesto Nuts baseball game and bbq.
September 16	General meeting. We are 40! Come have cake and celebrate with us.
September 23	Bus trip to Sutro Library and National Archives.
October 25	Fall seminar with Rhonda McClure.

I realized that our county needed a genealogical society where people with like interests could meet each other and share materials. I invited the three people I had met to my house in the summer of 1968, and the Stanislaus County Genealogical Society was formed over iced tea and dessert at my kitchen table. One of our first visits was to the San Joaquin Genealogical Society to see how they were organized. We learned about structure, but our bigger goal was to create a warm and helpful society. From the beginning, our society focused on helping each other and having a good time while we did it! Our group began to grow and we established monthly meetings and potlucks. We brought materials to share and had programs. Announcements of our meetings in the *Modesto Bee* brought new members. In 1973 I started teaching classes in Genealogical Research at Modesto Junior College and in the ten years I taught the class many students joined the society and have added so much to it through the years.

On our 40th anniversary we celebrate who we are now, and we have much to celebrate. How lucky we are in 2008 to have a cheerful and energetic president, Bev Graham, and such a very capable and knowledgeable editor, Susan Park, for the *Stanislaus Researcher*! As I look back through the years I am thankful for all of the leaders who have stepped forward when they were needed and I am particularly thankful for all of the friendships we have in our society.

The Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County is an amazing, living and growing organization, so let's have a bang-up 40th birthday celebration—with many, many more to come!

*Editor's Note: Every GSSC member, brand new or old hand, benefits from Pansy's organizing efforts so long ago. The techniques we learned from her classes are still being passed on to members today in our annual workshops and other presentations. I hope you'll all save the **September** meeting date and join us when we celebrate 40 years of genealogy in Stanislaus County. It'll be a great chance to meet and visit with some of the founding members and to share research tips with one another.*

### **Report on the 2008 Salt Lake City Trip**

*By Lisa Bruk*

On April 27th our group of 32 people—all women—left Modesto, bound for Salt Lake City to research at the Family History Library. Making it even more special was the fact that it was our 20th consecutive trip to Salt Lake.

We stayed at the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel which is right next to the Family History Library. Shortly after our arrival professional genealogist George Ott gave a seminar entitled, "Making the Most Our of Your Research at the Family History Library," at the hotel just for our group. The library had an orientation for our new researchers on Monday morning. Monday night we had a group dinner at Christopher's Seafood and Steak House in the historic Peery Hotel. We also celebrated Theo Schock's birthday that evening.

During the week we had weather ranging from the 80s to the 30s with snow. We spent many hours researching in the library. The wealth of information on the library computers, microfilms and fiche, and in books is almost overwhelming. Some of our group were very fortunate to find a great deal of information on their families or on the families they were researching for others.

At the GSSC general meeting in June Bette Locke was presented a Certificate of Appreciation and a pink azalea tree for being an integral part of the Salt Lake City Research Committee for 19 years, from the beginning in 1989 to 2007.

Bette was on the SLC committee with Meredith Snedigar and Lois Warner from 1989 to 1993, with Dorothy Jenkinson from 1994 to 2001, and with Dorothy, Jereann Farinha, Pat Grieve, and Bev Krieg

from 2002 to 2007. The current committee consists of Lisa Bruk, Bev Johnson, Theo Schock, and Wayne Black.

During the first five years researchers took a Storer bus to and from Salt Lake City. Every year since then we've taken a Storer bus to and from the Sacramento airport and flights to and from Salt Lake. Next year we leave on April 26 and return on May 3. Details on the 2009 trip will appear in the September newsletter.

Here are some of our travelers' comments, taken from their trip evaluation forms:

Marie Lewerenz: This was my first trip so I found a lot of information on my family, a few birth certificates and death records. I'm very pleased with my success.

Leah Meedom: I found a couple of stories about early Ohio pioneers and my Tatman family was in them, along with some names I didn't have. I also found some marriage and census records. All in all a very good trip.

Carmen Pedrioli: This was my first trip. I had no idea what to expect. When I found my family name was the first one on the first microfilm I looked at I was hooked. I got so engrossed I didn't even go to the orientation meeting. I have enough information to keep me busy for a long time. The most exciting finds were the marriage records of both my maternal and paternal grandparents. I can hardly wait to get everything sorted out. It's as if this family I'd only heard about has come to life.

Jean Tarabek: A desk researcher helped me find a ship's passenger record of my maternal great-grandparents (been looking on my own for three years). They came from Slovakia via Bremen to New York and brought a daughter with them that I hadn't known even existed.

Karen Yingling: found my grandmother's grandparents who were identified by information on my grandmother's parents marriage certificate. Found information on my uncle's demise during WWII. He was shot down over France in March 1944. His body was not found for several months. Still trying to connect my Yinglings to the Yingling Brewing Co., America's oldest brewery.

### **Trip Scheduled to National Archives and Sutro Library**

*By Beverly Johnson*

Another research trip is scheduled to the National Archives in San Bruno and to the Sutro Library in San Francisco on Tuesday, September 23, 2008. Cost for the trip remains at \$30 per person.

Our bus will leave at 7:30 a.m. from the north parking lot of Trinity Presbyterian Church located at 1600 Carver Road in Modesto (just south of Briggsmore) and return at approximately 7:30 p.m. Please park in the north parking lot next to the hedge facing Barkwood St. We will also make a stop at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Manteca if we have any folks from that area joining us.

For those who have never taken this opportunity to further your research, perhaps the following information will encourage you to join us. The Sutro Library has one of the largest genealogical collections west of Salt Lake City, with extensive resources for states other than California as well as some basic resources for California. According to its website, the NARA Regional Archives has holdings comprised of records from northern and central California, Nevada (except Clark County), Hawaii, American Samoa, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific islands, and constitutes a major primary source for the study of Asian-Pacific immigration, environmental, naval, Native American, and many other

aspects of American history. Both facilities are very accommodating in providing you with help in your research.

Tuesday, September 16th is the deadline for signing up for this trip. Please send your checks, made payable to GSSC, to me at 1924 Red Oak Dr., Modesto, CA 95354. If you have questions or need more information you can contact me at 209-526-5009 or [jbevjohnson1@aol.com](mailto:jbevjohnson1@aol.com).

This is a great opportunity to research and connect with your GSSC friends without the hassle of driving. Let's fill the bus!

### **Rhonda McClure to Speak in Modesto**

*By Susan Park*

If you missed hearing Rhonda McClure when she was in Santa Rosa earlier in the year, you are in luck. Rhonda is one of those nationally known genealogists, whose columns you've probably read in various genealogy magazines. Usually we have to attend large regional or even national conferences to hear professional speakers like her. For Valley-ites, especially, this is a real treat. Rhonda will be our featured speaker at the October seminar presenting the following four sessions:

- The 5Ws: using the Internet to Answer Who, What, Where, When, and Why
- Mining the Treasures in Newspapers
- Old and New: Combining the Best of Internet and Traditional Research
- Avoiding the Quagmires and Potholes Along the Genealogical Trail

A flyer promoting the seminar is enclosed with this newsletter. Please note, seating is limited for this event so don't put off making your reservation

### **Researching in the Azores?**

*This item appeared in the July-August 2008 issue of the Monterey County Genealogical Society newsletter. I am printing it exactly as it was written for the convenience of our Portuguese researchers.*

### **Portuguese Corner**

by Rosemarie Capdicci

[rcapodc@redshift.com](mailto:rcapodc@redshift.com)

Good news! The Azores government site: <http://pg.azores.gov.pt/drac/cca/ig> has finally started uploading the Parish Records. All of the Islands of Corvo and Flores are now online. They have started to put the records of Sao Jorge up. The villages of Calheta and Norte Pequeno have their baptisms, marriages and deaths up to 1911 online. The only problem I see is that you have to have Microsoft Internet Explorer or Safari to open the records. If you use Netscape or Firefox the records do not open.

If you mail me with any questions regarding the records please state the village, the year of the book you are searching in, and the **image number** not the page of the book. In this way we can all help each other read the documents!

**Queries***By Charlie Tieman*

During May we sent out an obituary, draft registration, and census records for Joseph A. Walter(s) who died in Modesto in 1943. Another request was for the marriage record of Florence Chamberlain who died here in 1962. The correspondent thought that she married the John Chamberlain listed next to her in the name index to the cemetery, but she was actually buried with her first husband Charles Wright. By checking our city directories, it was evident that she married Thomas E. Chamberlain around 1947 and was single again by 1956. Nothing more could be found for this marriage or for Thomas E. Chamberlain. A request for an obituary for Vurdis L. Pierce who died in Salida in 1987 produced only a short burial notice. We also provided an obituary for Jackson Jamison who died in Modesto in 1985.

We received some corrections to our cemetery listing posted on line for Oaklawn Memorial Park in Oakdale. Strangely enough, these corrections needed correcting to match the dates in the California Death Index.

**Special Collections Room at the Stanislaus County Library***By Susan Park*

Marilyn Belleville and her group of volunteers staff the Special Collections Room at the main branch of the Stanislaus County Library (16th & I Streets in Modesto) every Monday from 10:00 a.m. till 3:00 p.m. Whether you are just getting started in your search for ancestors or are an experienced researcher confronting a brick wall, you might get just the help you need there.

Marilyn makes sure that all the branch libraries receive notices and flyers about our Society's events, and she maintains an extensive shelf list of the genealogical holdings in the room. But even more important, all of the volunteers are there to teach researchers how to use this library more effectively. They will show you how to do everything from filling out that first pedigree chart to ordering books and film on inter-library loan, and how to use some of the special materials like the library-created Obituary Index available only at the reference desk. Sometimes all we need is another person to share our genealogical problems with, and on any Monday you'll find other genealogists in the Special Collections Room who understand and offer research suggestions.

Marilyn is there every Monday while the others work on a rotating schedule:

Bette Locke	1st & 5th Mondays
Charlie Tieman	2nd Monday
Peg Dixon	3rd Monday
Janet Lancaster and Nancy Robinson	4th Monday

A tip offered by Janet Lancaster: If you can't find your ancestor in an online census index, and you KNOW he's there, try the printed indexes available in the Special Collections Room. Before the internet, these indexes, published by state and year, were about the only way you knew where to look for your ancestor on a roll of microfilm. While few of us would want to give up our online indexes and documents, sometimes the old tried and true methods can still provide the answers we seek.

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**Acquisitions Committee**

*By Susan Park*

Our Society has many standing and special committees. You've probably seen them listed on the inside back cover of the newsletter, and may have wondered what, exactly, do these committees do? To satisfy my own curiosity I recently visited with Acquisitions Committee Chairperson, Lisa Bruk to find out what they're all about.

Lisa has been the Chairperson of the Acquisitions Committee since 2004. Other members are Marilyn Belleville, Janet Lancaster, Bette Locke, Ellen Reesh, and Theo Schock. They meet on an as-needed basis in the Special Collections Room of the Library.

They consider all suggestions from GSSC members in deciding what to buy. All proposed donations must be approved by librarian Andrew Lamance who is in charge of library acquisitions. The shortage of shelf space in the Special Collections Room has had a limiting effect on our purchases. Occasionally, the Acquisitions Committee has recommended re-binding of some of the older volumes in lieu of purchasing more books, but the purpose of the Committee is to purchase and donate new genealogical books that have been requested by our members.

I asked Lisa if the Committee has a plan or a schedule for book buying and she said no, but they do add more books to series that already in the Special Collections Room as they become available. I also wondered if they had ever turned down a request as not appropriate or for any other reason, and learned that, yes, they have turned down a few requests. The main reasons are either the requested book is too narrow in scope with limited interest for the general membership; similar books are already on the shelf; or the price is more than the budget will allow.

If you have a suggestion for a future purchase and donation to the Stanislaus County Library, get in touch with Lisa or any of the other Committee members. Any of them can answer your questions about how to proceed.

**Meet Your Board**

*Each month this year we will present a short biography of one member of the Board of Directors. This month features Jeff Wells.*

Hello, my name is Jeff Wells and I am proud to serve as a director at large for the GSSC. I really appreciate the way our group encourages everyone to dig the roots and climb the tree of genealogy.

I was born in western North Carolina, just west of Asheville. After graduating from Enka High School I moved on to the University of North Carolina at Asheville where I earned a degree in Traditional History. In December 1986 I married the beautiful, talented and witty, Carrie Halyburton. We have four children who arrived as two sets of twins. Our first pair, Whitney and Tegan, are 18 years old and in college. Our second pair, Zebulon and Brenna, are 11 year old 6th graders. I served in the US army before and during the first Gulf War. After service I lived in southern Arkansas and have made Modesto my home for the past 15 years. I am a founding member of the Stanislaus Civil War Association which will be celebrating its tenth anniversary next year. In 2006 I fulfilled a longtime dream of earning my private pilot certificate.

I was first drawn to history when, at the age of about seven or eight, I found out that my Grandfather was named after President Grover Cleveland and he also worked on the railroad. I was instantly hooked on history and it has always had a family connection for me. The natural extension of that interest was genealogy. I've been researching for 30 years and it's been a lot of fun.

One of the aspects of history that has always fascinated me is the interaction of individuals and how events affect the people involved. Genealogy is exactly that kind of research. It allows us a glimpse into how our ancestors lead their lives and how those lives add up to make us who we are.

### What's In Your Library?

By Susan Park

Sherry Jones, our Society's Correspondence Secretary, keeps the following books in her library. If you have books you don't mind sharing with fellow members, or from which you're willing to do look-ups, let me know.

- Everton's *Handybook for Genealogists*, various editions.
- *Collecting Dead Relatives—An Irreverent Romp Through The Field of Genealogy*, by Laverne Galeener Moore.
- *Twenty-Four Hundred Tennessee Pensioners: Revolution, War of 1812*, by Zella Armstrong.
- *Emigrants from Ireland 1847-1852—State Aided Emigration Schemes From Crown Estates In Ireland*, by Eilish Ellis.
- *The Source—A Guidebook To American Genealogy*, by Loretto Dennis Szucs and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, editors.
- *Old Heart of Nevada—Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Elko County*, by Shawn Hall.
- *Nevada's Northeast Frontier*, by Edna B. Patterson, Louise A. Ulph, and Victor Goodwin.
- *Colonial and Revolutionary Lineages of America*, published by American Historical Company, 1930.

#### HeritageQuestOnline Update

In a previous issue I listed some of the nearby libraries that subscribe to HeritageQuestOnline. Since then I've learned that Tuolumne County Library is a subscriber. If you don't want to travel to Livermore or Pleasanton to get an Alameda County Library card, perhaps a drive to the foothills would be more to your liking. The main library is in Sonora, with branches scattered throughout the county. Check out the county's website at [www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov](http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov) for more details.

Maybelle Allen, Membership Chairperson, reports she has a new email address. You can reach her at [rmallen213@comcast.net](mailto:rmallen213@comcast.net).

# The Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

## Night at the Ball Park

**What:** Baseball Game Modesto Nuts vs. Stockton Ports  
**When:** Thursday Night August 21, 2008 6:00 PM  
**Buffet:** 6:00 PM First Pitch: 7:05 PM  
**Where:** John Thurman Field  
**Menu:** Tri-tip, Hot Dogs, Beans, Soft Drinks  
**Price:** \$19.00 per person includes Box Seats for the Game and the Pre-Game Buffet

**\*\*Sign-up Deadline August 11, 2008\*\***

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

Baseball Game Event August 21, 2008

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work)

Number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

**Price: \$19.00 per person Checks should be made payable to GSSC**

Mail to: Jeff Wells 3533 Highmore Lane Modesto, CA 95357 or better yet bring it to the general meeting in June or August.

**Membership Information**

- Dues: Single membership, \$20.00 per year      Family membership, \$27.50 per year
- Stanislaus Researcher Published 10 times per year by Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County, P. O. Box A, Modesto, CA 95352-3660. Submit articles for publication to the editor via email: [pebfarms@yahoo.com](mailto:pebfarms@yahoo.com) by the 15th of each month.
- Address changes: Send address, email and phone number changes to Maybelle Allen at:  
 US Mail: Maybelle Allen c/o GSSC, P. O. Box A, Modesto, CA 95352-3660  
 Email: [gssc@att.net](mailto:gssc@att.net)  
 Telephone: 209-523-0593 (Maybelle Allen)
- GSSC web page: <http://www.cagenweb.com/lr/stanislaus/gssc.html>.  
 The newsletter is posted at this website, along with other interesting society-related items.
- General meeting: 7:00 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, except July and December at the Trinity Presbyterian Church at 1600 Carver Rd., Modesto, CA.
- Board meeting: 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month at El Vista Chapel (LDS) at 731 El Vista Ave., Modesto, CA.

<b>2008 Officers</b>		<b>2008 Standing Committee Chairs</b>	
President	Bev Graham	Acquisitions	Lisa Bruk
1st Vice President	Vicky Wolff	Audit	
2nd Vice President	Bev Johnson	Budget	
Secretary	Cleda Lane	Historian	Joyce Evans
Treasurer	Theo Schock	Membership	Maybelle Allen
Correspondence Secretary	Sheri Jones	Newsletter	Susan Park
Director at Large	Wayne Black	Planning	
Director at Large	Dick Freudenthal	Program	Vicky Wolff
Director at Large	Nancy Grant	Registrar	Nancy Grant
Director at Large	Susan Park	Research & Publication	Millie Starr
Director at Large	Jeff Wells	Seminar	Bev Johnson
Past President	Millie Starr	Workshops	Bev Johnson

<b>2008 Special Committee Chairs</b>	
Bylaws & Standing Rules	
Cemetery	
4 Generation Charts	Vicky Wolff
Memorial	
Mentor	Joann MacDonald
Newsletter Mailer	Wayne Black
Publicity	Sheri Jones
Published Sales	Carolyn Kerr
Queries	Charlie Tieman
Refreshments	Jackie Niemeyer
Research Bus Trips	Bev Johnson
Special Collections Room	Marilyn Belleville
Sunshine	Judith Welch

**We have 216 members.**



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