

STANISLAUS RESEARCHER

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

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Program Notes

October 21, 2008 7:00 p.m.

This month's program is all about Welsh research. If you have ancestors from Wales this might be of interest to you.

November 18, 2008 7:00 p.m.

November's program features our annual Ancestors Night. Members will bring something belonging to an ancestor and tell us about it. In past years we have seen many interesting items, ranging from letters to furniture, to clothing. This will also be our last general meeting of the year.

Message From President Bev Graham

There is nothing better than a good old party where we talk and eat and talk and eat. What could be better than that? Which did most of us do at the September Birthday Party? Well, I could tell what I did the very next day. With a sore throat I went in and picked out the biggest set of clothes I have in the closet. To think we have to jump a size just to reminisce! But what a great time we had. Looking at all the pictures and reviewing the history of our Society should give all of us goose bumps as we think of the great things accomplished over the last forty years. We must give credit to those who started this Society and those who are still carrying on the traditions started so long ago. What fun we had. Thank you Pansy for your inspirational talk and humor.

Last week I helped a neighbor with some research on her family. What is so amazing is that the first four generations of her ancestors are still with us. So, with great-grandma still around we might say she is getting information straight from the horse's mouth. What a treat! Now great-grandma is a spry ninety-seven year old and she's lived through several wars, times of prosperity, and, of course, those times when comfort was needed. When asked about the worst time of her long life she reminisced about the Great Depression and World War II. When asked about the good times she responded with stories about her family. When I'm ninety-seven and someone asks me the same questions I'll have to say the

housing market of 2008 and a couple of wars were the worst. Good things? Family. I guess some things never change, no matter what century you live in.

I know when my Aunt Gustie was still here she would tell me stories that were so unusual I sometimes had a hard time believing they were true. Coming to California in the '30s was like fleeing New Orleans during the hurricane. Nothing but hard work lay ahead. There was the time she took her doctor to task for ignoring her while she was in labor. She said he spent more time examining her screen door than attending to her. There was another time when she picked cotton. It was hot and dirty work but the pay was good if you could fill your sacks fast enough. Her three week old baby was placed on a bale of cotton under a tree while she picked. (No babysitters in those days.) The skin on her hands was cut and scratched, but she always picked enough to keep her babies fed. To Aunt Gustie such hardships were simply a part of life. I wonder how well today's young girls would hold up under such adversity?

This month is our busy, busy month: The Cemetery Walk, seminar speaker, Rhonda McClure, and our general meeting. We're just going to see each other SO much we'll just HAVE to become friends. I don't get to visit with as many of you as I would like at the general meetings, so this month I'm making it a point to circulate more, and I'll be looking for YOU. Until the first busy activity, live well!

Meet Your Board

Each month this year we will present a short biography of one member of the Board of Directors. This month features Director at Large Nancy Grant.

After following my husband around graveyards from Minnesota to Canada to Scotland, I decided that I must have some buried people of my own. My parents had always maintained close relationships with a wide range of family members, so I had a good supply of contacts. Whenever I made a phenomenal discovery I shared it with an interested third cousin—who already knew that bit of information! One productive move was joining the Ostfriesen Genealogical Society and delving into the mystery of my Vanderwerff ancestors. I am also interested in Bloyer, Whitt, Erickson, Hicks, and Spieker.

After living in Minnesota, Illinois, and Connecticut, I landed in California in 1948. I attended local schools and grew up on Grantland Count, the first subdivision of my future father-in-law. Although our parents knew each other, my husband and I did not meet until we ended up in a biology class together at Stanford. We were married in 1962 and now have two married sons and a total of six grandchildren.

My favorite hobby is sewing and I have won several sewing contests and have made five wedding dresses, including my own. I am involved in teaching Sunday School, tutoring adults in reading, participating in a book club, exercising with water aerobics, and enjoying my family. I have personally greeted and shaken hands with an African chief and a Supreme Court Justice.

Report on Modesto Nuts Baseball BBQ

By Jeff Wells

It seems that our first trip to the ballgame was a big hit! The GSSC members who attended the Modesto Nuts game on August 21 had a great time. The food provided by the Nuts was great and the game was loads of fun. It was fantastic to get together, chat, and watch an exciting baseball game in a relaxed social setting. It was also wonderful to meet many of the members' spouses, family, and friends. This event was so well-received we might just do it again next season!

October is Family History Month

By Susan Park

October was officially declared National Family History Month beginning in October 2001. S. R. 160 was unanimously approved after being introduced by Senator Orrin B. Hatch of Utah. Since that time, October has become one of the busiest and most important months for genealogy society program and membership chairs around the county. What better time for a society to show off its accomplishments and recruit new members? Here are a handful of events planned for our area.

October 4 Cemetery Walk on Saturday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. in Modesto Citizens' Cemetery. Enter the cemetery from Bodem Avenue and gather at the cemetery's office building. Wear your walking shoes, and be prepared to be entertained by more of the cemetery's residents in this all-new program. This is a free event and open to the public. Any questions contact Millie Starr at 522-8868 or milliestarr@att.net. Please note the change of time.

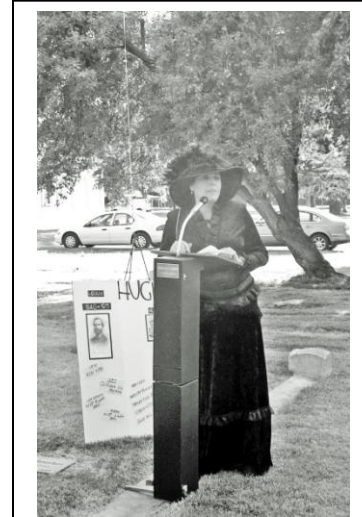
October 11 Family History Day at the California State Archives from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission is free. Details can be found at www.sos.ca.gov/archives/archives.htm.

October 11 Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group presents Barbara Renick who will speak on The Magic of Family History at the Quince Avenue Chapel located at 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara. Hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Free admission. See www.svcgg.org for further details.

October 25 Rhonda McClure appears in Modesto at the McHenry Museum in the basement auditorium. If you missed Rhonda's appearance in Northern California earlier this year, here is your second chance to hear this nationally acclaimed speaker. Program begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m. \$25.00 for GSSC members and \$30.00 for non-members. Topics on the program are:

- 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

To register, please make your check payable to GSSC and send to Bev Johnson, 1924 Red Oak Dr, Modesto CA 95354. For further information or questions, contact Bev Johnson at 209-526-5009 or jbevjohnson1@aol.com.



Sheri Jones as Luella Avery Hughson tells the audience about her family and friends at the first Cemetery Walk held earlier this year in May.

Techno-Genealogy

By Susan Park

Finding census microfilm numbers: A proper citation of U.S. federal census records requires the NARA or FHL microfilm number. If you're looking at the actual film it's a snap to remember to write it down because it's right there in front of you. But for the greater majority who rely on Ancestry.com or similar websites for their census records viewing, remembering to record the roll number of the original record is really hard—almost as hard as it is to find the roll number in the first place. Here are some tips on how to locate those roll numbers.

If you are using Ancestry.com you just need to pay attention to the fine print. For an example, I searched for Edward P. Whitmore on the 1900 census for Stanislaus County. Ancestry gives you two options. Click on the icon on the right side of the line and you can view the document. This is where most of us go first. However, if you click the icon on the left side of Mr. Whitmore's name, you will get a summary of what's on the original. It lists the name, birthplace, marital status, parents, and so on. At the bottom of the page, in tiny writing, you'll find "Source Citation," "Source Information," and "Description." If you look carefully, you'll see something like this on the "Source Citation" line: Year: 1900; Census Place: Turlock, Stanislaus, California; Roll: T623 115; Page: 4B. Notice that Ancestry.com doesn't include the E.D. or family and dwelling numbers, but you can easily get those from the image itself.

If you are using FamilySearch.org the procedure is a little different. Using the *Record Search-Pilot* module for U.S. and U.K. censuses, I found Edward P. Whitmore in the 1900 federal census. Click on his name and bring up a summary which includes all the usual identifying information, plus E. D. number (0058) and household number (74), along with the film number (GSU 1240115).

For those of you who have stacks and stacks of census printouts from Ancestry.com, and for which you have NO microfilm roll numbers, Steve Morse has come up with a quick way to fill in the missing information. If you go to his website (www.stevemorse.org) and click on *1790-1930 Census Rolls: Obtaining Microfilm Rolls for the 1790 to 1930 Census in One Step*, this handy utility will locate those numbers. All you have to do is select the year, state, county, and E. D., which is on your paper copy, and Steve will instantly show you both NARA and FHL roll numbers. Very cool.

Family Tree Maker 2008: In the April-June 2008 issue of *NGS Newsmagazine* there was a review of *Family Tree Maker 2008* by Barbara Schenck which contained all the usual information. I haven't used *FTM* for record keeping purposes for quite awhile, but I still keep an older version on my computer so that I can read a CD containing all the back issues of the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*. The CD was published by *FTM* as CD #210 *Family Archives, NGS Quarterly, Vols 1-85*. It's a wonderful resource and provides plenty of reading enjoyment, but it can only be read through the *FTM* program.

In her review Barbara Schenck says that *FTM 2008* doesn't let you view data CDs through the Family Finder Viewer program. I have quite a few of *FTM's* data disks which I rarely use, and I would sure hate to lose the ability to look at those old NGS journals. I was glad I read this review as I hadn't seen that particular feature (or lack of) mentioned in other reviews.

On-line family trees: There are many new websites that entice us to upload a gedcom file and offer our family trees to the general public for viewing. Probably the best known is the Ancestry/Rootsweb site. They have thousands upon thousands of family trees uploaded by just about everyone, it seems. There is a lot of duplication, most don't seem to contain much in the way of sources, but it's a favorite place to start for many beginner genealogists. There are some other websites: Myfamily.com; Geni.com; We're Related.com; and my favorite (today, anyway) WeRelate.org which is sponsored in part by Allen County Public Library.

I plan to write more on these websites in the future but for now if any of you have had any experience with these or other on-line family tree websites, I'd like to hear from you. Have you used any of the family tree sharing programs on Facebook or MySpace? What has been your experience? Was it easy to figure out? Have you limited sharing to certain people or do you have your family tree open for public viewing? The technology of genealogy is changing and it's an exciting time for the adventurous. If you have any opinions on the subject please send them to me at pebfarms@yahoo.com.

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 Nancy Grant and won second place in the Southern California Genealogical Society's writing contest in 2002.

California: Goldmine of Diversity

Our squat, black 1934 Chevy pulled up in front of the courthouse in Modesto, California on a hot September day in 1948. All six of us rolled out and sprawled on the lawn, glad to be at the end of a transcontinental journey. Thus ended the Westward Movement of our family, which had begun two centuries earlier.

Napoleon in Switzerland, unemployment in Sweden, stifling tradition in Germany, poverty in England, harsh winters in Canada—all these negative factors caused my ancestors to look Westward to “America, the Land of Opportunity.”

Each group felt comfortable in the new land by gathering with their own kind. The settlers from Germany did not think of themselves as Germans, they were from Ostfriesland, an ethnic conclave in a tiny area of northwest Germany across the border from the Netherlands. They spoke Plat Deutsch and practiced a culture very similar to the Dutch. In their new home in Illinois they were thrilled to find cheap farmland and a church for communal worship in their own tongue.

The first known emigrant from the Swedish side of my family was Lisa Svensdotter. She and her husband cleared land in the Minnesota woods and constructed a log cabin in the 1870s. That home still stands today in Scandia Historical Corners, Minnesota, as a memorial to the first Swedish settlement in Minnesota. I wouldn't be telling the whole story if I didn't acknowledge that Lisa was such a harridan that she drove her husband back to Sweden. However, other family members arrived in America and set to farming.

The German and Swedish strands came together in North Dakota about 1900, as homestead claims were offered. By now everyone spoke English and considered themselves Americans, so there was no hindrance to the tall Swede courting the lovely German lady on the next farm. Thus my paternal grandparents were married in a church “handsomely decorated with green and white crepe paper cut in strips,” according to the *Globe-Gazette*.

It has been claimed by some in our family that the English ancestors were related to Daniel Boone. Then the story was downgraded to claim that they moved West with the Boones. The final version rather tamely states that they came through the Cumberland Gap in the general influx into the Ohio Valley after the American Revolution. They pushed on West to Wisconsin, where they encountered the French-Canadian branch. My maternal grandparents grew up near each other, married, and discovered that they shared a great-grandmother.

These varied strands of ethnicity came together in Minnesota for my birth. I am Diversity rolled up in one person. I carry a Swedish name, an organized Germanic personality, a love of languages, a Northern European propensity for osteoporosis, and an English flair for gourmet cooking (joke!).

Two ancestors were Revolutionary War soldiers; one was a Ku Klux Klan member; several died or were injured in the Civil War. Many descendants became teachers, business entrepreneurs, adventurers, farmers, government officials, secretaries—but all branches sent shoots out to California. Far flung—from Eureka to Hemet—we don't all know each other, but we form pieces in the "Goldmine of Diversity" of California. And the youngest generation has been enriched with an adoptee from China.

Note: Since this writing we have also welcomed a Korean daughter-in-law and now a grandson who is half Korean. What will the future hold?

Learn to Be a Better Researcher

By Susan Park

Does it seem like all of your ancestors end at the proverbial brick wall? Do you secretly envy others who seem to trip over their ancestors every time they open a book? Are some researchers really that lucky, or does luck find them after they've labored to build a good foundation on which luck can light?

If you are content to search for your ancestors by looking at on-line family trees, then this article isn't for you. If you do want to break through the brick walls and you do want to meet your ancestors and really get to know them, then read on.

If you want to receive a high quality genealogical education at a reasonable cost, and in the comfort of your own home, then look no further than the on-line courses offered by National Genealogical Society. The following on-line courses can be started at any time. The cost is \$35 per course for NGS members and \$50 per course for non-members.

1. *Introduction to Genealogy* is designed for those who are just beginning their search for ancestors. Students will learn how to record the information they find; how to write proper source citations; how to find twentieth-century vital records; how to find birth, marriage, and death records for those who lived in earlier centuries; and how to use on-line library catalogs and other finding aids.
2. *Federal Population Census Schedules* is designed for those who want to know how to get more out of their census research. Students will learn to identify types of information found in the federal population schedules; interpret and evaluate that information; use on-line microfilm catalogs; and will become familiar with Enumeration District (E.D.) descriptions and maps.
3. *Special Federal Census Schedules* teaches students about the often overlooked Special Schedules. Included in this course are lessons based on the Slave Schedules; Indian Population Schedules; Veterans Schedules; and the Supplemental Schedules of the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes. There are also more lessons on the Mortality Schedules and the Agriculture, Industry, and Social Statistics Schedules. You can't really say you've done your census work until you've also searched these special schedules. This course will teach you how to use them effectively.
4. *Transcribing, Extracting, and Abstracting Genealogical Records* is for the more experienced genealogist who is ready to move on to using original records that can't be or haven't been copied or digitized. This is basically a note-taking course in which students learn to make handwritten or typed exact copies called "transcriptions;" handwritten or typed partial copies called "extracts;" summaries or paraphrases called "abstracts;" and other brief notations of the general contents of a record. There is a technique to genealogical note taking and it's not

as simple as you might think. This course will definitely enhance your ability to attract that luck that other genealogists seem to have. You can have it too, if you know what you're doing.

If all that hasn't scared you, there is one more offering from NGS that will certainly enhance your ability as a researcher, and that is the home study course in American Genealogy. The course material is presented on CDs and is not available on-line. This is for those who are serious about their research training. There are sixteen lessons and on average it takes about eighteen months to complete all the lessons. All of the student's work can be graded and critiqued by professional genealogists. Not everyone who begins this journey completes it, but if you have the stick-to-it-iveness of a good researcher, you will complete the course and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you are well-armed to kick the you-know-what out of those brick walls.

Prices range from \$315 to \$495 for NGS members. Prices vary depending on whether you buy all the CDs at once, or separately, and whether you want your work graded or not. There are further discounts for those who've taken any of the on-line courses. While the course is designed to be done individually, there are options for groups of students to take the course together. If anyone is interested in pursuing any of these educational opportunities and would like to know more, check it out at www.ngsgenealogy.org.

GSSC Volunteers Needed

By Susan Park

It's possible that by the time you read this your Nominating Committee will have already assembled a full slate of officers for next year. That doesn't mean that we don't still need your help. Most committees are comprised of a single person—the chairperson—when they should have at least two or three other members to lighten the load of the chairperson. Some important committees don't even have a chairperson.

Board service is a wonderful way to give back to the Society. Board members have the opportunity to make decisions on behalf of the membership at large. If you've ever been dissatisfied with programs or seminar offerings, if you've ever wondered what we do with your dues, if you've ever complained at the lack of special interest groups, or if you've ever wished we offered more research trips, **YOU NEED TO STEP UP AND OFFER YOUR SERVICES**. Complaining with your friends won't change anything, but accepting a position as an Officer or Committee Chairperson could be just the shot in the arm we need.

Board service does require some of your time, but it's not the same as a full time job. A few hours a month is all we ask. Some committees only need to meet two or three times a year to accomplish their work. It's also a great chance to meet other members and widen your circle of friends. So, the next time one of your fellow Society members calls upon you for help, please say yes, and help us make our Society even better than it already is.

Happy Birthday To Us

We celebrated our Society's fortieth birthday at the September general meeting. After the business part of the meeting was finished Millie Starr gave a short talk on our accomplishments. Copies of all the books we've published were on display, along with the Society's scrapbooks. There were other displays around the room—pictures of past presidents, pictures from some of the old Photo Sessions we used to hold, and there were display-boards from our first Cemetery Walk held earlier this year. The Four Generation Charts had been dressed up and were in plastic sleeves inside new binders. President Bev Graham also announced the names of those members who've been with us, through thick and thin, for over fifteen years. Certificates were presented to the long-time members. After the break we were entertained by founding member Pansy Willburn. She introduced us to some of her favorite ancestors and reminded us of how much more difficult it was forty years ago to conduct genealogical research. It was a wonderful evening. Will you be at the Fiftieth Birthday Party in ten years?



GSSC members enjoying an evening of visiting with friends and talking about their ancestors.