

# STANISLAUS RESEARCHER

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

June 2009

Volume 31, Number 6

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## President's Message

By Beverly Graham

Well, summer is almost upon us. I'm sure everyone is anxious to get moving, traveling, and visiting friends and relatives. Of course, there is the bbq-ing...but I swore I wasn't going to say anything about food in this short note. Just like me to mention food again.

Our last meeting before the start of summer is the one in June. We have an empty July and then we start up again in August. I'm hoping in August to hear all the tales of your traveling to states and countries, far and wide, to do some research. Courthouses, graveyards, libraries, and the like—what a fun time!

Me and Mine won't be traveling very far. I think the doctor and pharmacy are the farthest I've been in quite a while. Of course, there is always the search for a new restaurant. Oh NO, there I go again. Stop that food talk, Bev! I can be quite sneaky though. Sometimes to justify my being a food-ie, I take some type of genealogy paper with me when we eat out. That way I can say I'm doing research with dessert!

Robert Givens was our speaker in May. If you missed him you missed a great presentation. He brought his wife who was just as charming as he was. After the meeting Mrs. Givens came to me and

## June Program

June 16, 2009                      7:00 p.m.

At our last meeting before summer break we will hear Dr. Katherine Royer, history professor at Cal State University, Stanislaus, talk about "Women and Disease in Colonial America."

Dr. Royer has a PhD from Stanford and an MD from Tulane University. Her fields of study include medieval and early modern Europe, Britain and the Empire, legal history, and the history of disease.

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It's not too late to go to the Modesto Nuts baseball game with your GSSC friends. The game is scheduled for Thursday night, June 18th at John Thurman Field in Modesto. Dinner is included. Cost is \$19.00 per person. Contact Jeff Wells to sign up. His number is 579-2510.

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**We're on vacation!**  
**Remember, there'll be no meeting and no newsletter in July.**

expressed how impressed she was with our Society. She said, "You are all so busy and have so much going on. You have a writing group, an Arkansas group, trips to Salt Lake and the to the Archives. You are having a Cemetery Walk, going to a baseball game, and having an ice cream social in August. It's just like you are one big, happy family, with everyone having a chance to do what interest them most. This is just the most wonderful society I've seen." I thanked her and said I had to agree. We ARE a great society, with hard working members. We should all be proud that the dedication and enthusiasm of our members can be seen by others and through outside eyes.

I'm hoping to see you at the June meeting. This way we can get together one more time before our summer break. Instead of a joke or two, I just might bring you a recipe instead to tide you over till August. Oh, just think, I'll have all summer to gather up many food-ie stories to share with you all.

### **GSSC's 2009 Salt Lake City Research Trip**

*By Lisa Bruk*

This year seventeen GSSC researchers had an enjoyable, successful Salt Lake City trip: Lisa Bruk, Jereann Farinha, Pat Grieve, Rosalie Heppner, Bev Johnson, Carolyn Lemas, Marie Lewerenz, Bette Locke, Diana Loomis, Mildred Lucas, Leah Meedom, Carmen Pedrioli, Ellen Reesh, Charleen Renteria, Jean Tarabek, Judith Welch and Karen Yingling. The smaller group allowed all of us to get to know one another better.

We left Modesto on a Storer bus in the early morning of April 26 to spend a week researching in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. We had roundtrip flights between Oakland and Salt Lake on Southwest Airlines, and had no problems with traffic to and from the airports or with the flights.

At our Sunday night seminar in the hotel, professional genealogist George Ott, seeing all the familiar faces in our group, changed his talk to tell us about the recent changes in the library and to give us suggestions as to how to make our research more productive. We remembered Peg Dixon with a special toast at our Monday night group dinner at Christopher's Seafood and Steak House. During an emergency drill in the library everyone had to evacuate the building, which gave us another chance to appreciate the beautiful spring flowers on the LDS grounds. Some of us attended the Mormon Tabernacle Choir rehearsal and mini-concert Thursday evening and helped Ellen Reesh's celebrate her birthday at a dinner at the Marriott Saturday night.

Sunday morning we headed for home with many suggestions that we make the trip a day or two longer next year. Our 2010 trip will be the week of April 18.

Here are some of the research findings of members of our group on this trip:

**Lisa Bruk** found that her husband's ggggrandfather in Slovakia had two wives and 16 children. From information on a marriage record of this family, she was also able to go back another generation on another line. She filled in some missing marriage and death dates and found a great deal of information in Norwegian books about her Norwegian ancestors. She attended four Family History Library classes on Scandinavian research and found them all very informative and helpful.

**Pat Grieve** found some birth, marriage and death dates she didn't have and finally found one of her Swedish grandmother's sisters with her husband and children in Chicago. Pat didn't know she had immigrated as early as 1880.

**Bev Johnson's** goals were to research the genealogical paths of her grandfathers, both Swedish immigrants. Using some of the tips George Ott gave us in his seminar about using all the tools we have at hand, she found her maternal great-grandfather, a soldat (Swedish soldier) with his family and dates, and

his father, also a soldier, in another town and parish with family and dates. All of this was complicated by the military surnames given to them. She emailed Dalsland Soldatregister in Sweden for information about them and, upon returning home, found that reports on both of them had been emailed to her. The problem was that the reports were in Swedish so she emailed the reports to the Family History Library where the staff translated them into English and emailed them back to her. She learned that her ggggrandfather was “for disorderly conduct on probation, 1821” and “condemned for debauchery, 1825.” Bev had an “aha” moment when she found that her ggrandfather migrated from his modest plot of farmland to a more industrialized city, Trollhattan, and was housed in worker housing for NOHAB, an early company in railroad and aeronautical design and turbines. He and his son, Bev’s grandfather, had become blacksmiths. Her grandfather, also employed by NOHAB, became president of the newly organized labor union and a strike leader, and finally in 1909, immigrated to America. She is still searching for her paternal grandfather’s ancestors in Sweden. She checked over forty microfilms for his naturalization documents in Cook County, Illinois, in 1913. Also, searching with her cell phone, she found and talked to one of her only three living cousins. Then, just for fun, she jumped into the Ancestry.com database, modestobee.com, and found things she never knew about her own dad and mom in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

**Carolyn Lemas** found the marriage license of her husband’s grandparents, and a baptismal record for another grandfather that gave the parents’ and grandparents’ names. She also found a will that may lead to her finding another generation.

**Marie Lewerenz** found her husband’s family back to Germany plus relatives living there for two generations. She found her paternal ancestors back to 1803 and her maternal ancestors back to 1850.

**Bette Locke** found that a girl listed as a daughter of her ggggrandfather Peter Perry was not his daughter, a mystery solved.

**Mildred Lucas** found her family’s names in several U.S. presidents’ lines and will have to investigate these maternal lines further. She also found a marriage between a pair with her two least common surnames – generations before the two families with those surnames merged.

**Leah Meedom** found some Civil War information that helped her.

**Carmen Pedrioli’s** aim was to get information on a great uncle who went to England. She was able to verify family stories and add factual information. She finally has all the dates that her uncles and great uncles entered the U.S. She found her Swiss paternal grandmother’s birth certificate and verified her complete name, and found other birth certificates and marriage records. Looking through the *Modesto Bee*, she found stories about an aunt and an uncle and a sister-in-law and found out that her parents and older brother and sister had been in an auto accident on 14<sup>th</sup> Street in 1938. She said, “Last year I began a journey of discovering my family beyond its immediate members. This year I continued the journey, adding not only facts but understanding. Next year I hope to add a little more.”

**Charleen Renteria** was successful in searching Mexican parish records one generation on three lines. Baptismal records included parents and grandparents and the maiden name of the mother. She used a flash drive for copying microfilm and computer database records.

**Jean Tarabek** finally found the birth of her ggrandparents in Slovakia plus the marriage and birth of her ggggrandparents, all on her father’s side. She’s still looking for information on her mother’s side. She also

found some information for her neighbor's family, Sicily to Connecticut to San Francisco, and found the Italian birth records difficult to read.

**Karen Yingling** is still looking for her father's father in Pennsylvania between 1910 and 1915. She doesn't know where he was at that time, but if he left Pennsylvania, he returned in time for the 1920 census.

### Checking More Than the Index

*By Joann MacDonald*

We have all heard over the years as we have done our research, "An index is only as good as the indexer." I was on the bus trip sponsored by the genealogy society to the Oakland Family History Center at the beginning of the May. I was trying to focus on one of my sea captains who lived in New York. Angus Roderick MacDonald was a Master Mariner who sailed the world and I have literally searched the world for him. His father, Angus Roderick, was also a Master Mariner who left his native province of Prince Edward Island in 1868 to sail the ship the *Aerolite*. He met the love of his life, Elizabeth McEvoy, in Waterford, County Waterford, Ireland and married her in February of 1869. He had several children, all born in Ireland, until his seafaring life took him to England where Angus Roderick was born. The family grew in size and was found on the 1881 English census living in Cumberland County. After the father's ship wreck the family returned to Prince Edward Island in 1886, I don't think the father went to sea after that. Angus Roderick was a lad of seven years by then. I think maybe the family had lived on the father's ship and made voyages with him so I don't know if some of the children really knew where they were born. Angus Roderick usually stated that he was born in Canada even though I have his birth record from England! I am never sure where he is going to say he was born. He usually used his middle initial of R and most always spelled his name MacDonald.

The Italian Genealogy Group has a wonderful site for the New York area. They have databases that cover Vital Records and Naturalization. Their web site is <http://www.italianguen.org>. Last year I discovered a person in their Naturalization Database whom I believed was my Angus Roderick. He had used his "signature R and MacDonald" for his name. It just happened that my cousin was going to be in Salt Lake the next week. She checked the record and it was indeed my man. She scanned it and sent it to me while in Salt Lake. He had been naturalized in 1910. After much searching on ancestry.com, I found him living in Brooklyn, New York in 1920 and 1930. He had acquired a wife by the name of Rose by the 1920 census. The census gave her birth place as New York City so it was plausible that they were married in New York. I couldn't find a marriage record for them. I knew the Angus in the index was not mine as the date was not a possibility and the wife's name was not Rose.

In my preparation for going to Oakland FHC, I used their web site and discovered they had a microfilm index for marriages in all boroughs of New York for 1888-1937. It more than covered the time period I was interested in. I started my search with the film that covered 1910-1913. I did not locate my man so I went to the next film that covered 1914-1917. The film had two people of interest. The marriages had both taken place in Oct of 1914, one on the 20th and one on the 25th. The name was Angus R. for one gentleman and August R. for the other gentleman. Light bulbs went off as in older records "u" and "n" seem to be a problem. Could someone have missed read the letters? Could this really be my Angus? What about the "t" added to the second gentleman's name? This index did not have something I could click on to see who the bride was. I couldn't wait to get back to Modesto and go to the on-line site. This time I put in the name MacDonald and just put an "A" so I would get a full listing all the men whose name began with "A". I clicked the August and he had married a Rose Rudluk. Was I home free? Did I have the right man? I checked the next listing of August. My heart sunk. He was married to a Rose Redlich! How could I come so close and then not know? Life was not fair to have two ladies by the name

of Rose with similar last names to have married an Angus /August MacDonald with the middle initial of "R" within five days of each other in New York City!

I e-mailed my cousin Ruth in New York and said, "What's the scoop? How can two people with similar names be married five days apart?" She replied for some reason, at a certain time period in New York they had to be married at City Hall and then several days later they had the religious ceremony. She ordered the certificates and then called me. "We have the right person. On the certificate and looking at the signature it is clearly Angus Roderick MacDonald. The indexer had taken the "n" for a "u"! Rose's name is clearly Redlich. The proof was that his parents were given as Angus MacDonald and Elizabeth McEvoy! The message is to check all the given names in an index. The indexer just might have read the name wrong.

The rest of the story is that she also got the death certificate for an Angus Roderick MacDonald who died in Richmond County, New York in 1942. When I mentioned Richmond County she immediately said, "That is Staten Island. There was a seamen's home there." The death certificate says he died and was buried at Sailors' Snug Harbor. I did a Google search and found out that it was founded for seamen in 1833 so they would have place to go when their seafaring days were over.

I have come full circle for Angus Roderick MacDonald. I now have his birth, marriage and death certificates, all found from on-line sites. I know he was seaman and through many on-line sites I have been able to find out the ships he captained and places he had visited in the world. My job is not done. I have more sites to check for missing pieces of my family puzzle. My break on this family came when I was in Dublin, Ireland in 1990 and found the marriage record of Angus Roderick MacDonald's parents, Angus MacDonald and Elizabeth McEvoy

### **More on Pre-Statehood Names in the U.S.**

*By Susan Park*

We received a question from one of our readers in response to the article in last month's issue entitled *What's In Your Library?* Anne Field wrote, "I just read your article about putting in correct place names and locations. I am stumped as to how to put in places such as New Orleans in the early 1700s, the Arkansas Post in the later 1700s, and Pensacola, Florida when it was under French or Spanish rule."

Bearing in mind that I'm no expert, here are some things for Anne and other readers with similar problems to think about. Of course, the first thing to do is pinpoint the year(s) that your ancestors resided in the area. Then head for the library and start consulting the state and local history books for details of that territory's early days. There you will usually find a time line of some sort with the various names by which the place was known.

Mary H. Slawson, author of *Getting It Right*, states on pages 137, "Rule One: Always enter the place name as it was called on the day the event took place in the place name field." In the case of Arkansas Post, we need to remember that the French had possession of this area for many decades and they did not speak English. Under French rule the Arkansas Post was known as Poste de Arkansa or Poste de Arkansas. In 1763 under Spanish rule, Arkansas Post's name was changed. Most general histories say it was changed to Fort Charles III or Fort Carlos III, but the Spanish would have called the place Fuerte de Carlos III.

A quick review of pre-Louisiana Purchase history shows us the boundaries were fluid and ownership passed between France and Spain more than once. In 1800 France re-acquired the Louisiana lands from Spain, but didn't formally accept them for two years. During those two years Spain continued overseeing affairs there. When France found a willing buyer for their huge North American holdings, they formally took possession and within a few weeks sold it all to the United States at the end of 1803.

Boundary disputes between Spain and the U. S. led to a creation of a neutral territory in what is now western Louisiana, called the Sabine Free State. The boundary dispute wasn't settled until 1821 so if you had ancestors living in this area between 1806 and 1821 you might want to learn more about these matters.

Florida boundaries and ownerships have been just as jumbled in the past. At various times that part we call the Panhandle was under French, Spanish, and British rule. And even after the United States was established, much of the land outside of the original thirteen colonies went by various names.

Ms. Slawson suggests in her book that we include the current day name of the location in the place name notes. If you really want to get into it, you could write out a complete list of all the name and ownership changes, but I would guess that most of us won't go to that much effort. We need to study the geography and political history of our ancestors' neighborhoods. Some over-achievers will go back as far as they can and may include such histories in their work, but seasoned amateurs (probably most of us) will simply do their best to get it right, up to the point when their ancestors first showed up.

Finally, remember, this is supposed to be fun. Even if you don't record the ancient place names in their proper language, there is no reason why you can't still learn all you can about the geography and politics of your ancestors' neighborhoods. It is possible to do a good job, learn something new, and still have fun while tracking down your ancestors.

### Ora Mae Crane

On Saturday, May 16th, a large gathering of Ora Mae's family and friends met at First Methodist Church in Modesto to remember her life in words, pictures, and music. After the service, there was time for eating and visiting with old friends in the social hall. Despite the sadness of the occasion, it was a pleasant day and a fitting way to remember our friend.

Within our Society Ora Mae served on the Board of Directors, participated in seminars and workshops, and was an "early adapter" of technology. She was likely the first of us to own a laptop, back in the late 1980s. She was among the first to use the more advanced (and complicated) computer programs for recording her family history. She was on board for practically all of our research trips, and took plenty of research trips on her own to fill in the blanks on her pedigree charts. She published several books on her various lines, complete with documentation, indexes, and captioned pictures. How many of us have done as much?

## 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.

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**We have 195 members.**



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