



# Sonoma County Genealogical Society Newsletter



February 2003

## President's Message

by Evelyn Ross

**S**er-en-dip-i-ty : the gift of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. G.&C. Merriam Co.)

Perhaps some of you have had serendipitous experiences. Most of us have at least read of books falling off library shelves on to the heads and into the hands of a person who subsequently finds generations of surnames. If not the ancestors, the book will contain information that will provide a major break-through in that person's research.

How about stories of walking through an old cemetery and literally stumbling over a hidden tombstone belonging to the very ancestor being looked for.

The closest I've come to such an experience is having the four huge volumes of Revolutionary War pension abstracts placed where I couldn't possibly overlook them, and finding my 5<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather. This lead me to his 52-page pension file. I not only learned all the names and birthdates of his spouse and children (including son-in-laws), but I also found among an inventory of personal possessions that he owned a "three-legged pot with one leg broken" valued at 25 cents.

My discovery pales, however, when compared to a recent experience of one of our Society members, Carol Tisnado. Over the holidays Carol checked a book out of the library titled *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy, 2nd Edition*, by Val D. Greenwood. While reading through the

chapter on the intestate and the probate process, she was amazed to find a Petition for Probate for Samuel Stahl, dated February 10, 1904 in Columbia County, Wisconsin. Samuel Stahl is Carol's 2<sup>nd</sup> great-grandfather! This has proved to be a valuable piece of her research puzzle.



If you have a similar story to tell, why not share it with the newsletter. If you don't have such a story, I would encourage you to do more digging into your family's history...something fun and interesting is sure to turn up.

Meeting:  
Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Rosemary  
Kennedy, NARA  
"Search  
Techniques:  
Finding a  
Genealogy  
Specialist  
Ancestor at the  
National  
Archives"

Santa Rosa J.C.  
Lark Hall  
1-3pm

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Visit Our Web Site at: <http://www.scgs.org>

The Sonoma County Genealogical Society is a Nonprofit Organization which Encourages Interest in Genealogy and Family History

Volume 13, Number 3

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## Meeting Speaker

by Fawn Hill

*The National Archives - Where the Ties That Bind Our Lives as a Nation are Perpetuated*

Our February speaker, Rosemary Kennedy, comes to us from the San Bruno Regional Office of the National Archives and Records Administration. She represents the facility located nearest us geographically.



Throughout the Country there are several other sites of this incredible institution that houses a nationwide network of records and services much to the delight of genealogists and historians.

Rose Mary was born in California and is a first generation American whose parents came from Ireland. She graduated from the College of Notre Dame in Belmont California with a B.A. in English and History. From there she also has an Elementary Teaching Credential.

After several years of teaching she entered into government service in 1979, working first at the

Federal Record Center and became a permanent staff member of the National Archives Pacific Region in 1981.

Currently she is the Reference Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator for the San Bruno site. She teaches many of the workshops that are offered there and is often a guest speaker representing the National Archives. We are fortunate to have her share with us her vast background in the world of genealogical research. Keep this meeting date, Saturday, February 22, 2003, on your calendar without fail.



## Needed! SCGS Searcher Editor

A new editor is needed for Sonoma County Genealogical Society's quarterly publication, The Searcher. Duties are:

1. Serve as chairperson of the editorial board and oversee Searcher departments.
2. Attend society board meetings to stay current with society business.
3. Recruit editorial board members who are skilled in writing and in the mechanics of journal production.

4. Manage production of the journal, both in form and content, within broad outlines provided by the board of directors.

The new editor will be assisted by Searcher board members who have been on the job for many years. Also, the current editor, Claire Miller, is willing to remain on the board.

If you are interested in this very interesting volunteer position, please contact either Evelyn Ross at 539-0926, or Claire Miller at 539-2858.

*Evelyn says,  
"We need you! Be a volunteer"*

*Subscribe to the Mailing List: Send the a message that contains (in the body of the message) the command "subscribe" to  
SCGS-L-request@rootsweb.com*

## 10 Day Genealogy Cruise, Oct.1

Join the California Genealogical Society for a spectacular New England/Canada Fall Foliage cruise with informative genealogical lectures presented by George F. Sanborn Jr. FASG FSAC and David Allen Lambert.

The 10-day cruise on Royal Caribbean International's Grandeur of the Sea sails round trip from Boston and will make stops in Maine, Nova Scotia, Quebec and New Brunswick. Cruise fares start at \$1300 per person based on double occupancy, port and government fees are \$222.75 per person. There will be eight lectures and most will be of interest to all genealogists. You will also have the opportunity to meet with the speakers informally during the 10-day cruise.

This sailing is very popular and will fill up fast. If your reservation is made BEFORE December 15th, All Cruise Travel will provide each participant with a \$50 shipboard credit (maximum:\$100 per stateroom).

For specific information call All Cruise Travel (800) 227-8473. Or visit their website [www.allcruise.com](http://www.allcruise.com) click on "hosted tours" For genealogy questions, email Jane Lindsey at [library@calgensoc.org](mailto:library@calgensoc.org)

During the cruise we will have informal gatherings before dinner to talk with fellow participants.

### *About the Speakers*

George Freeman Sanborn Jr. FASG FSAC has been on the staff of the New England Historic Genealogical Society for 20 years. His areas of expertise are the Northern New England States, the Canadian Maritime Provinces and the Hebridean islands of Scotland. He is a frequent lecturer at regional, national and international conferences. In addition to many published articles, he is the co-compiler of "Vital Records of Hampton, NH to the end of the Year 1900" and Editor of the 2nd Edition of the "Genealogical Handbook for Atlantic Canada".

George F Sanborn's lecture titles:

- 1) Loyalists and Pre-Loyalists in Atlantic Canada: Getting it Right
- 2) Using Diaries, Letters, and Account Books
- 3) Scottish Highland Surnames: More Than Meets the Eye!

4) The Northern and Eastern Limits of New England: Where does it end?

David Allen Lambert has been researching for over 20 years. Since 1993 he has been on staff at the New England Historic Genealogical Society. His areas of expertise are New England records, New Brunswick, Computer Genealogy, Military and Native American records. He recently published "A Guide to Cemeteries in Massachusetts" and has published articles in many genealogical journals. David is a popular speaker at local and national conferences.

David Allen Lambert's lecture titles:

1) Beyond the Death Record: Utilizing Cemetery Records and Other

Resources in Your Research.

2) Read Between the Lines: Getting the Most Out of Newspaper Research.

3) Using U.S. Military Records: Revolutionary War Through World War II.

4) Computer Genealogy Strategies: "From Index Cards to Laptops" and "Surfing the Internet to find Great-Grandma"

We hope you will join us to see the incredible foliage along the New England coast and Eastern Canada.

### *Condolences*

We just learned of the death of member, M. Jeanne Bunbury who died recently.

Our sympathy is extended to her family and friends.

Glen Hill, husband of our active Vice President and Annex Library worker, Fawn Hill, died on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>.



Our sympathy is extended to her family and friends.

## Sonoma County Genealogical Society

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# SCGS Projects Progress Report: January 2003

by Carmen J. Finley

## *Heritage Books Has Been Acquired by Willow Bend Books*

Dick Eastman's column of 12 January carried the announcement that Heritage Books has been acquired by Willow Bend Books. "The combined company will now be the largest genealogy publisher (over 2,500 titles in print), and the largest genealogy retailer (over 12,000 titles in stock) of books, maps, and CDs dealing with history and genealogy. We have not been notified by Heritage just what this may mean to us.

## *Nichol's Cemetery Guide*

Jeremy Nichol's *Cemeteries of Sonoma County, California A History and Guide* is now listed in the regular Heritage Catalog at \$27. A letter from Corinne Will, Editorial Director, dated 7 January states the contract should have been directed to Jeremy as sole author instead of SCGS and even though we have signed a contract she is making the change.

## *New at the Library*

by Maggi Andrews

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 606.4 S      | <i>Golden Gate Expo. ... Official Guide Book</i>  |
| 728 C        | <i>Evaluation of the Arita Family Farm [Penngrove-Archaeological Resource Service]</i>                                    |
| 929.1        | <i>The Genealogist's Question &amp; Answer Book</i> ; by Melnyk   |
| 929.2 T      | <i>The Tibbetts Trail [&amp; associated names]</i>  |
| 929.3755 B   | <i>History of Williamsburg</i> ; by Boddie  |
| 929.379418 N | <i>The Neil's Island Cemetery</i> ; by Nichols  |
| 979.379418 H | <i>Pleasant Hills Guide to the Pioneer Section</i> ; by Hagle   |
| 979.379418 H | <i>Steele Family Cemetery [Santa Rosa]</i> ; by Hansen  |
| 979.415 C    | <i>Caspar Note Book - School Days</i> ; by Connor   |
| 979.415 C    | <i>Caspar Calling</i> ; by Connor   |
| 979.415 C    | <i>The Golden Years of Caspar</i> ; by Connor   |
| 979.419 R    | <i>The Past is Father of the Present... Spanish California History ... San Francisco &amp; Napa County</i> ; by V.J. Rose |
| 979.46 B     | <i>Fascinating San Francisco</i> ; by Brandt  |

## *Militia Records*

Our copies of the Militia Lists of Sonoma County, California, 1846-1900 have arrived. They are priced at a pre-publication cost of \$49.

## *1930 School Census*

Proofing continues on this project and will soon be completed.

## *School Attendance Records*

Proofing is about 75% complete on this project.

## *Vital Data in Newspapers*

New volunteers have been recruited and Audrey Herman held a training session.

## *Sonoma Searcher Index*

The listing of *The Index to the Sonoma Searcher* is listed in the January catalog of HeritageBooks. Pre-publication price

## *From Jo Russell's Mailbox*

From: Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter

### *Accuracy of Online Genealogy Information*

This week a newsletter reader asked if I might comment on a series of messages posted to a mailing list server that attacked Ancestry.com. I read through the mish-mash of statements and found a number of comments painting Ancestry.com in a negative light. The various messages all claimed that you couldn't trust the information found on the company's Web site, and that you still had to verify the information elsewhere. The general theme was that this particular online site was not a good place to find genealogy information.

My favorite line was, "Searching the records at NARA is more reliable and still necessary."

Duh! Where have these people been? Of course you still have to verify information elsewhere. You always do that with every piece of genealogy information you find, whether it is from an online site or from a published book or other printed genealogy publication. That is a basic in Genealogy 101: "Always check your sources."

Anyone who thinks that this is an issue only with Ancestry.com or only with another online genealogy database is misguided. The same issue applies to Ancestry.com, RootsWeb.com, Genealogy.com, FamilySearch.org, GenCircles.com, OneGreatFamily.com, books you find at the library, messages receive in e-mail, and even this

*Continued on page 5*

*Continued from page 4*

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weeklynewsletter. It is true of all secondary sources and even occasionally of primary sources.

### **Whatever you read, check it out!**

I consider Ancestry.com to be valuable. I consider the other online resources I mentioned to be valuable. I also consider genealogy books to be valuable. I also solicit e-mail assistance from other genealogists. But I never, ever believe anything I read until I can verify the claims.

I also hear people moaning and groaning about the quality of genealogy information to be found online. There are claims that much of the online genealogy data is worthless. These comments seem to insinuate that people shouldn't place information online until they have verified it.

You know what? I don't care. I want to see the claimed information anyway. Yes, I even want to read the inaccurate information. When I am looking for the unknown parents of one of my "end of the line" ancestors, I want to see every possible clue, accurate or not. If someone else thinks he or she knows the parents of Washington Harvey Eastman, I want to know what that person is thinking. No, I don't care if their information is accurate or not because I am going to check it out anyway. If possible, I'll contact the person who created the information and ask, "Where did you find that?" I'll find out later if the information is accurate or not when I verify it in primary records. All I want is ideas and hints of possibilities.

In fact, this is all you ever find online or in print: ideas and hints of possibilities. Remember that nothing is ever a "fact" until you personally prove it.

I will also point out that genealogy information found online today is no different from information published in books before the invention of the Web. Walk into any major genealogy library and grab a bunch of books written 50, 75 or 100 years ago. You will find some books that were carefully researched, while others were not. I can show you some old genealogy books that are true fairy tales. In short, the same is true of the data you find today on the World Wide Web. The only things different about the Web are speed and convenience: it is easier and faster to publish accurate and inaccurate information alike. However, the percentage of inaccurate information doesn't seem to have changed much in the past 100 years.

In summary, the e-mail messages attacking one particular online database missed the point. This is not an issue with Ancestry.com, nor is it an issue with RootsWeb.com, Genealogy.com, FamilySearch.org, GenCircles.com, OneGreatFamily.com, or the information

found on some distant cousin's personal home page. It is an issue dealing with conducting genealogy searches.

Quoting from Ancestry.com's own site at

<http://www.gale.ancestry.com/learn/learning/gedcoms.htm>:

"You verify and corroborate every single detail. Never assume that someone else did all the research and did it correctly. Even if their research is documented with sources and citations, recheck every detail before you accept it as fact."

*This article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright 2003 by Richard W. Eastman.*

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## *Claire Miller Included in Book About Hobbyists*

In April 2002, a book about obsessive hobbyists was published by Simon & Schuster. The unwieldy title is *The Banana Sculptor, the Purple Lady, and the All-Night Swimmer: Hobbies, Collecting, and Other Passionate Pursuits*. The co-authors are Susan Sheehan and Howard Means. Chapter 28 is "Claire Miller: Family Ties."

When asked how she came to be a subject for the book, Claire answered, "My husband's army buddy Ed Goldfader and his wife Paula became friends of Susan Sheehan when she wrote an article about Ed for *The New Yorker*. I readily admit that there are many people who know much more about genealogy than I do, but maybe not too many who are more obsessed with genealogy!" She went on to say, "And, no, I didn't get paid ... unless you count the thrill of being included in a book by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author. (Susan won the Pulitzer for *Is There No Place on Earth for Me?* Houghton Mifflin published the book in 1982.)"

As for the process, Claire explained that in July 2000, "Susan spent a night in our home and interviewed me for over eight hours. In February/March 2001, we produced a flurry of e-mails back and forth, as Susan polished 'my' chapter." Claire continued, "The involvement in the book has resulted in another bonus: I now count Susan among my friends."

Anyone who's curious can find *The Banana Sculptor* at the central branch of †the Sonoma County Library. The call number is 745.1-Sheehan.

## Rescheduled *Stamping Out Errors*

Previously published in RootsWeb

Sonoma County  
Library and the  
Sonoma County  
Genealogical  
Society

present an

### INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Forum Room  
Sonoma County  
Main Library  
3rd and E Streets  
Santa Rosa,  
California

February 15,  
2003  
(Instead of Feb.1)  
1:00 PM

Conducted by  
Anthony Hoskins  
History, Genealogy  
and Archives  
Librarian  
Sonoma County  
Library

For more information please  
call  
707/545-0831,  
ext. 562

**D**aily your editor and the RootsWeb HelpDesk receive comments and complaints about some “incorrect” genealogical information that has been discovered online. Unfortunately, you are barking up the wrong tree. We can’t help you. There is no army of editors and professional genealogists at RootsWeb or on the Internet who check and verify genealogical data or family trees—posted by individuals. RootsWeb hosts thousands and thousands of independently authored webpages, but it does not edit or verify the information posted therein.

Moreover, there is no way to prevent incorrect genealogical information—or information that disagrees with your findings—from appearing on the Internet or in traditional sources either, for that matter.

Genealogical errors can be found everywhere—in Internet databases such as WorldConnect, in Message Board posts, in Mailing List messages and archives, in books, in historical society records, and even in official records. All of us make typographical and transcription errors and the more often data is keyed and re-keyed the greater the chance of errors. There is no law prohibiting you or your cousins from submitting or posting error-ridden data online (or publishing it in a book). A major complaint received is about the spelling of surnames, but there is no right or wrong way to spell a surname. See: “Why U Can’t Find Your Ancestors: Misspeld Knames—A Commun Problem for Researchers,”

<http://rwguide.rootsweb.com/lesson8.htm>

What you can do though when you find information that you believe to be incorrect or disagrees with your records is to counteract it by posting or submitting the information that you have. Wherever someone can submit incorrect information online, you can add the corrected data. Post your data and sources or evidence for your conclusions on appropriate RootsWeb Message Boards, Mailing Lists, and/or submit your family tree to WorldConnect.

By ensuring that the correct information is also readily available, others viewing both sets of data can make informed decisions.

Additionally, by including the sources for your data it will assist other researchers to know where the information came from and which version of the “facts” is more likely to be accurate.

\* \* \* \*

Search/download all back issues of RootsWeb Review: <http://e-zine.rootsweb.com/>

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*Review: Vol. 5, No. 52, 25 December 2002.*

*Happy Valentine’s Day*



## Special Interest Group



### British Group

The British Interest Group meeting is being arranged, but no details are available yet. Those on our British Group e-mail list will receive individual notices. If you are not on the e-mail list but would like to get information about the next meeting, please contact Susan Simons at 527-7191.



### German Group

The next two meetings of the German Interest Group will be as follows:

Saturday, 1 March 2003, at 10 AM at the home of Dorothy Blake, 7245 Wilton Ave, Sebastopol, phone 823-1993.

Saturday, 3 May 2003, at 10 AM. The location of this meeting has not been determined.

For information about the German Group, contact Jim Cochran at telephone 526-7331, or by e-mail at <cougars@sonic.net>.

For information about the German Group, contact Jim Cochran at telephone 526-7331, or by e-mail at <cougars@sonic.net>.



### Irish Group:

For information about the Irish Group call Myrtle Keefe at 539-0840, or CAMYRT2@aol.com



### Jewish and Eastern European Group

No meetings are scheduled. Contact Suzanne S. Waxman, phone 538-4378



### Computer Group

Meet on Saturday, February 15 at 1:30 p.m. in the LDS Family History Center on Peterson Lane. The subject will be "Tips and techniques for searching, especially in indexes." Susan Simons at 527-7191.



### Italian Interest Group

The Italian Interest Group meets every other month and our next meeting will be at the home of Ines Williams on March 15th at 10 AM. For more information e-mail me at inesw@attbi.com. Come join us.

## Upcoming Events

### March 8, 2003 - Sacramento, CA

Root Cellars, the Genealogical & Historical Council of Sacramento Valley and the California State Archives are hosting their annual **FAMILY HISTORY DAY AT THE ARCHIVES** at California State Archives, 1020 'O' Street, Sacramento. Research, resources, computer demonstrations, preservation techniques, genealogy and historical mini-classes. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Free Admission. For more information, contact Iris Jones, email <ijones@accessbee.com> or web site <www.ssa.gov/archives/level3\_famhistday.html> <[http://www.ss.ca.gov/archives/level3\\_famhistday.html](http://www.ss.ca.gov/archives/level3_famhistday.html)> .

### March 15, 2003 - San Mateo, CA

The San Mateo County Genealogical Society presents Nora M. Hickey of County Cork, Ireland, who will discuss the following topics: Debunking Myths of Irish Genealogy, Extracting all the Information from Griffith's Valuation, Little Known and Under Used Irish Genealogical Sources, and Discussion of Common Problems in Irish Genealogy. Attendees may submit questions at least two weeks ahead for a specialized Question and Answer session. Send the questions to Cath Trindle at <Catht@aol.com>. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location: 1st Presbyterian Church, 25th and Hacienda, San Mateo. Cost: Preregistration - \$20 members, \$22 non members, Lunch \$6; At the Door - \$23, Lunch \$7. Mail your registration to: SMCGRS Irish Seminar, PO Box 5083, San Mateo, CA 94402-0083. Include name, address, phone and email as well as number of attendees with your check. For more information contact Cath Trindle, phone 650) 572-2929 or email <Catht@aol.com>.

### March 22, 2003 - Santa Rosa, CA

The Sonoma County Genealogical Society will host their eleventh annual Spring Seminar with Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, CG, FUGA at The Cooperidge at Sonoma State University, 1801 E. Cotati Avenue, Rohnert Park. Flyer included, contact Lois Nimmo, phone (707) 537-1684 or email <LoisNim@aol.com> or visit the web site <[www.rootsweb.com/~cascgs/carmack.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~cascgs/carmack.htm)> <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~cascgs/carmack.htm>> .

## Beginners Site

by Jo Russell

This is the URL for the Beginning Genealogy Tutorial through BYU. I accessed the site this morning.

<<http://ce.byu.edu/is/famhist/secure/start.htm>>

I was impressed when Alan Mann discussed this site, connecting briefly to demonstrate the material available on the site.

I think it might be a very good tool for the "Beginning Genealogy Workshops" in the library, if the sound works through the computer there.

Newsletter Published Monthly (with the exception of July, August and December) by the Sonoma County Genealogical Society P.O. Box 2273 Santa Rosa, CA 95405-0273

Dues: \$20 per year individual or family (one household) \$25 contributing (\$5 to book fund) \$200 lifetime

## Coming Soon

*February 28 - March 1, 2003 - Pasadena, CA*

The Southern California Genealogical Society will be hosting their 34th Annual

**GENEALOGICAL JAMBOREE AND FAMILY HISTORY FAIRE**, a two-day conference at the Pasadena Convention Center, 300 East Green Street, Pasadena. Donation: \$12 for 1 day, \$20 for 2 days. For program updates, please check the website <[www.scgsgenealogy.com](http://www.scgsgenealogy.com)> <<http://www.scgsgenealogy.com/>> . For more information, contact Southern California Genealogical Society, 417 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91504. Phone (818) 843-7247 or email <[scgs@earthlink.net](mailto:scgs@earthlink.net)>.

### *Just a reminder*

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack will be presenting a full-day seminar at Sonoma State University in March. We have fewer seats this year than previously, so get your reservation in early if you plan to come.

Details at: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~cascgs/carmack.htm>

## General Meeting

*Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>*

*Rosemary Kennedy,*

*NARA "Search*

*Techniques:*

*Finding a*

*Genealogy Specialist*

*Ancestor at the National*  
*Archives"*

*Santa Rosa J.C.*

*Lark Hall*

*1-3pm*

## Non-Profit Mail

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