



SCGS

Sonoma County Genealogical Society May 2006 Newsletter

President's Letter

By Tony Hoskins, May 2006

Cousins Unaware!

I thought my e-mail to a genealogy listserv to which I belong might be of interest. I hope this might inspire you all to make similar discoveries of interconnectedness among the married couples in your ancestry.

Given at least some ethnic commonality, the statistics are overwhelmingly in favor of a 9th to 11th or so cousin-ship for any two Americans with even a tendril of 17th century immigrant European-to-America ancestry. Some cases in point—married couples with utterly no knowledge of relationship (until I came along):

My parents, William and Jessie (Shields) Hoskins:

9th cousins (descents from Thomas and Phebe (Parkhurst) Arnold); 9th cousins, once removed (twice) from John and Ann Barlow, also 10th cousins (twice) from John and Ann Barlow; and 10th cousins, once removed (twice) from John Pabodie.

My paternal grandparents, Glenn and Louise (Maxwell) Hoskins:

9th cousins, once removed by descents from Anders Bratt [Norwegian living in Holland, father of the NY immigrants Albert and Arent Bratt].

My great grandparents William and Julia (Comstock) Maxwell:

6th cousins, once removed (twice) by descents from Gideon and Sarah (Prudden) Allen; 7th cousins by descents from Phineas and Ruth (Wood) Upham; 8th cousins (twice) by descents from Thomas and Anna (Stacey) Fitch; 9th cousins (twice) by descents from Francis and Anne (Goode) Wakeman; and 8th cousins, once removed (twice) by descents from Sylvester and Sarah Baldwin.

Etc., etc., etc.

In eleven years teaching genealogy at Chicago's Newberry Library, I never once failed to find at least one student in my four yearly classes that wasn't at least a 10th cousin of mine.

I was amused but not surprised to discover that my colleague [Katherine Rinehart] here in Santa Rosa turns out to be my 8th cousin, once removed—we being mutually descended from Josiah and Martha (Miller) Hollister (1696-1749 and 1696-1777, respectively) of Glastonbury, Connecticut.

It can truly be said that, for many of us, a high percentage of the population is a Cousin Unaware!

*Please note
change in
speaker for the
May meeting:*

*May 27th
Meeting*

*Speaker Claire
Miller*

Source

*Citations:
What Every
Genealogist
Loves to Hate*

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Lark Hall

*Santa Rosa
Junior College*

*Also at the
May meeting:
the election of
officers*

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 16, Number 5

May Meeting: Source Citations: What Every Genealogist Loves to Hate

By Lorel Kapke, May 2006

At the May 27 meeting of the Sonoma County Genealogical Society, Claire Miller will speak on the topic "Source Citations: What Every Genealogist Loves to Hate." She says, "Once you embrace the idea that documenting your research and citing sources are essential to family history, it's not terribly difficult to learn some guiding principles and gather together a few templates to keep handy while you're working in a library or at your home computer." It's important to note that the talk will have a special emphasis on an area of concern that has arisen in the past decade: creating citations for genealogical data found on the Internet.

A past president of SCGS and former editor of the society's quarterly, Claire began researching her ancestry in 1988. She now admits, "I had no idea what I was getting into. Genealogy was supposed to be an amusing little hobby—not my life's work!" Books, computer equipment and research files now fill her home office, as well as several filing cabinets in the garage.

A perpetual student, Claire has attended the National Archives Course in Washington, D.C., the Virginia Institute of Genealogical Research in Richmond, the Institute for Genealogical and Historical Research at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama (three times), and the 2004 NGS convention in Sacramento. In addition to "about 10" research trips to Salt Lake City, she has also conducted research at DAR Library, the National Archives and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., the Library of Virginia, the Allen County Public Library, the Rhode Island Historical Society, and the Newberry Library.

Having discovered direct ancestors in at least 18 states, Claire predicts that she will never finish her American research, much less track all of her immigrant ancestors back to their points of origin in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and (probably) Belgium and Holland. The current focus of her research is the Québec ancestry of her great-grandfather George Edward Normandin.

Recognition and Thanks to a Great Seminar Committee

By Lois Nimmo, April 2006

Jim Cochran rounded up the raffles prizes and with help from Lorel Kopke, Claire Miller and Helen Strickley collected a sizeable amount of money from selling raffle tickets.

Annie Conley recruited vendors to be at the Seminar. She also took care of the "freebies" table.

Carmen Finley is the contact person with the speaker. She meets the speaker, takes her to the hotel and picks her up to take to the Seminar, then reverses the whole procedure. Carmen is also the person who coordinates advertising the Semir in many web sites.

Tony Hoskins, as President of our Society, acted as advisor to our committee and emceed the actual event.

Muriel Morrow also wore numerous "hats." She took care of publicity, purchased goodies for the refreshment table and sold coffee, tea, water and pastries all day. Her helper was Audrey Phillips.

Ray Owen was again in charge of registration. His helpers were Maggie Andrews, Moria Gardner and Joe Panaro.

Audrey Phillips was the registrar and secretary to the committee. She keeps me on track!

Cathy Stevenson again designed the flyer and program.

We all thank every one of you for your diligence and work in making these Seminars a success with nary a hitch!!

Sonoma County 'cemeterian' Jeremy Nichols returns Calistoga's traveling 'tombstones'

Submitted By Jeremy Nichols

Sonoma County 'cemeterian' Jeremy Nichols returns Calistoga's traveling 'tombstones'

By John Waters Jr., EDITOR

Thursday, April 27, 2006 1:19 AM PDT

In his near-decade of service to Calistoga, City Manager Jim McCann has brought a number of plaques and proclamations back to the Calistoga city offices from various grateful agencies, but last week he brought back something a little different: three gravemarkers that, early this week, were resting quietly, as gravemarkers generally do, in the offices of Calistoga City Clerk Sue Sneddon.

Markers placed at the heads of graves don't usually get around much, but in the last 115 years the three wooden "tombstones" have made the trip from Calistoga to a barn near Guerneville to an evening on display at the Napa Senior Activities Center and, a week ago, came back to Calistoga.

McCann was on hand at last week's meeting of the Napa Genealogical & Biographical Society meeting in Napa to accept the markers and bring them back upvalley.

"The markers are in incredibly good condition," McCann said. "It would be surprising if they were ever in the ground at all."

McCann said the next step is to figure out what to do with the eerie, but interesting gift.

"We're going to be working with any remaining members of the family to figure out what to do with them, either return them to the family, or maybe donate them to the Sharpesteen Museum."

Mysterious appearance

How the ghostly white, hand-hewn markers managed the nearly 100-mile jaunt is, for the most part, a mystery that may never be solved, and that's the fun part -- at it is least for Jeremy Nichols, a retired semi-conductor maker turned, quite unexpectedly, he insists, Sonoma County's only bona fide "cemeterian."

Since retiring in 1997, Nichols, has been digging up the past by resurrecting in some cases, the stories of the oft-forgotten cemeteries of Sonoma County. He has also created a first of its kind organization, "Tombstone Amnesty," which is dedicated to returning lost or stolen tombstones to their rightful cemetery.

"We accept, no questions asked, tombstones that someone has at their home or wherever," Nichols said. "If someone has a tombstone because they think it looks nice in their garden, they can keep it, but if they'd like to get rid of it, we will figure where it belongs and return the tombstone."

Tombstone Amnesty is not a police organization, and Nichols will not go around questioning people about the origin of any tombstones they might have.

"We don't want people ratting on their neighbors," he said. "Tombstone Amnesty exists to take in unwanted tombstones, so they're not lost or destroyed forever."

On Thursday, Nichols shared the organization's first success -- the return of the three wooden gravemarkers to what might be termed their final resting place, Calistoga -- with about three dozen people at the Napa Valley Genealogical & Biographical Society meeting.

"I don't know how (the gravemarkers) came to be stored in a barn near Guerneville, and that's something we may never know," Nichols said. "But if you let your imagination run wild you can come up with all kinds of ideas, but it doesn't feel right to suspect that they were ever stolen."

Continued on page 4

The whitewashed, but otherwise unscarred “tombstones,” as they are usually called, presumably started their journey across time and space about 115 years ago, at the head of the graves of Heinrich, Maria and Paul Munk, who, according to the dates on the pale markers, died in 1885, 1887 and 1891 respectively.

But you can't believe everything you read.

“Maria actually died in 1897,” said Arlene Pettet, of Calistoga, the great granddaughter of Christopher Klotz, Maria's brother. “This whole thing is really exciting for me, no matter how the markers got to where they are today.”

The markers were discovered in a barn on land once part of a farm owned by the Ridenour family along the Russian River, according to Nichols. A Ridenour family member passed the markers along to historian and retired Sonoma County Deputy Sheriff John Schubert, who is a member of the Board of the Sonoma County Historical Society.

“He passed them along to me,” Nichols said. “It was after some research that I was able to learn that they likely belonged in the Pioneer Cemetery in Calistoga.”

According to Arlene, who has known about the Munk family long before the markers turned up, Heinrich and Maria followed Heinrich's brother to Calistoga in the early 1870s from their home near Stuttgart, Germany, with their nine children, the youngest of whom was born in the early 1870s.

“They were farmers, and had a vineyard in Calistoga's Teale Canyon,” Pettet said. “It was a productive farm, although I don't know how large it was.”

She knows little about Heinrich's life or death, was only that he was 53 when he passed. A few years later their son, Paul was killed in an accident on the farm at age 24.

“He and a Chinaman, according to an old newspaper article, were attempting to load a third puncheon (A cask containing sometimes 84, sometimes 120, gallons) of wine onto a wagon,” Pettet recalled. “Attempting to position the wagon a little lower to make loading it easier, he moved to the head of the horses. He lost control of the horses, who were apparently unable to hold the estimated 33,000-pound load.”

The article described the accident, that Paul's head was trampled by the horses, and that a wheel “had passed from his right hip across his chest,” crushing him.

“The last thing he said to the Chinaman before he died was ‘go for the doctor,’” said Pettet. “A juried inquest was held after the coroner arrived on the train from Napa, and his death was ruled accidental. I guess they didn't take anybody's word for it.”

Rest of the story

The mystery of the traveling tombstones may continue to unfold for some time.

“The story of these tombstones isn't over by any means,” said Nichols. “It's going to take some more research to find out why they were in Guerneville. It could be that they were never in the ground, or that they were all created about the same time by some family member who decided they didn't like them and decided to go with a stone monument instead. The possibilities are what make this so exciting.”

Another possible connection the markers may have with the Napa Valley might exist in Napa.

“I had a long talk with Ruth Munk, of Napa,” said Pettet. “We're both very excited about the possible connection between my family and hers.”

Ruth Munk is the wife of Napa's former Chief of Police, Sherwood Monk, who joined the Napa Police Department in 1936.

“Most of his family lived here in the Napa area,” said Ruth Munk last week. “It would be interesting to see if some of the family from up there (Calistoga) moved here, or the other way around.”

Grave markers returning to Calistoga

Submitted By Jeremy Nichols

Grave markers returning to Calistoga

By John Waters Jr., EDITOR

Thursday, April 13, 2006 1:15 AM PDT

When City Manager Jim McCann returns from his New York vacation next week, one of the chores on his agenda is to bring a trio of grave markers to their final resting place, in Calistoga.

At a ceremony at the Napa Senior Citizens Center one week from today, McCann will be given three wooden headboards, lost for many years from the Calistoga Pioneer Cemetery. They are being returned by a group known as Tombstone Amnesty of Sonoma County.

The grave markers, or headboards, belong to members of the Munk family, pioneer residents of Napa County.

How and why the headboards disappeared from the Calistoga Pioneer Cemetery and how they ended up in a barn in Sonoma County is a mystery.

Last month, the headboards, which are weathered, but in otherwise good condition, were turned over to Jeremy Nichols, Cemeterian of the Sonoma County Historical Society, who traced their origin to Calistoga and made arrangements for their return to Calistoga.

The gravemarkers once marked the final resting places of Heinrich Munk (1831-1885), Maria Munk (1839-1887), and Paul Munk (1867-1891).

The search for their family history and for any living Napa County descendants is ongoing at this time.

Tombstone Amnesty returns lost or stolen tombstones to their rightful cemetery. The group accepts, no questions asked, tombstones that anyone finds has at their home, in the barn, or wherever, according to Nichols.

"If the possessor knows where the tombstone came from, so much the better," according to a statement on Nichols' Internet Web site. "If not, we will figure it out and return the tombstone."

Tombstone Amnesty is not a police organization, and is not intent on going "around questioning people as to the origin of the tombstone that happens to be in their back yard."

"We don't want people ratting on their neighbors," said Nichols. "If anyone has a tombstone and wants to keep it, fine. Tombstone Amnesty was created to take in unwanted tombstones, so they're not lost or destroyed forever."

Thursday's returning ceremony will take place at the regular monthly meeting of the Napa Valley Genealogical and Biographical Society.

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Special Interest Groups



British Interest Group The next meeting will be in June. For more information call Audrey Herman at 539-4031.



German Interest Group The next meeting will be in Fall 2006. For more information, Contact Jim Cochran at 526-7331.



Italian Interest Group The next meeting will be in September 2006. For information e-mail Ines Williams at inesw@comcast.net.



Computer Interest Group The next meeting will be 20 May 2006, 1 p.m. at the Sonoma County Library Annex, Third & E Streets. There is parking across the street (25 cents for 20 mins.) as well as parking on the street. This will be an informal meeting with questions or something to share. For more information, contact Maggi Andrews at 538-1775.

From the Archives of Genealogy Jack

By Ray Owens

Jack,

My great-grandfather was a naturalized citizen having been born in St. Petersburg, Russia. I have information from his Petition for Naturalization of 1919 which shows his date and place of birth, the date of immigration, ship, port of departure, date and port of entry and that he filed his Declaration of Intent to become a citizen in District Court, Washoe County, Nevada in 1914, although he was later naturalized in Marin County, CA. Can any additional information be obtained from the naturalization records?

Uncertain

Dear Uncertain,

It's suggested you secure either a copy or an abstract of the Declaration of Intent. While much of the information is duplicated in the Petition, the Declaration may show an occupation which may be different from that shown in the Petition and, more important, by 1919 the Declaration recorded the last place of foreign residence. This can often reveal a migration route from the place of birth to the port of entry. Likewise, the fact that your great-grandfather filed the Declaration in Nevada and the Petition in California is indicative of an emigration route after entering the U.S.

By the way, I too am a bit "uncertain." Spouse Jill arrives home from work in 15 minutes, and I have to decide between making the bed, doing the breakfast dishes or vacuuming the rug.

Good luck with the court record.

Good luck,
Genealogy Jack

Continued from page 4

Pettet said she and her new-found-friend, Ruth Munk, will continue to research the possibilities.

Meanwhile, back at the City Clerk's office, Sneddon doesn't feel creepy about having the markers hang out for a while.

"It's a little bit of history," she said. "I like old cemeteries anyway, like the one in Virginia City, Nev., where they have some really old graves. It sort of gives you the feeling that you're walking back in time."

More information

The Napa Valley Genealogical & Biographical Society has compiled all the burial records in Napa County from the early 1800s through 1994. It's available for purchase on CD ROM from the Society. Carole Fisher, of Napa, a Society member, is also working on a book about all of Napa County's cemeteries. Meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at the Napa Senior Center, 1500 Jefferson St., Napa at 7:30 p.m. For additional information

Jeremy Nichols has also written book, "The Cemeteries of Sonoma County: A History and Guide," from Heritage Books. It's available on Amazon.com or www.Heritagebooks.com. He may be e-mailed at cemeterian@tombstoneamnesty.org.

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For the latest update of this story, please turn to page 7 of this newsletter.

Tombstone Update

By Jeremy Nichols, May 2006

Why did three headboards for the Munk family of Calistoga end up in the Ridenhour family's barn on the Russian River above Guerneville? Is there a family relationship between the Munk and Ridenhour families? Input from readers is requested.

The latest news is that the return of the Munk headboards by Tombstone Amnesty was covered in the Weekly Calistogan and Napa Register newspapers and generated a call to me from Mr. David Simich of the Napa Marble & Granite Works. A tombstone had been dumped at his front door ten years ago and he had been working ever since to find where it belonged. I was able to determine that the headstone, for "Little Nettie Combs," had been stolen many years ago from the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery. Nettie had died in June 1877 and her brother Chester died nine days later. It must have been a very sad time for the family. Nettie and Chester had similar tombstones; Chester's was still in Rural Cemetery.

I went to Napa, picked up the tombstone, and returned it to the Rural Cemetery Preservation Committee. They were glad to have it returned after so many years. **A formal return ceremony is scheduled for 4:00 P.M., Tuesday 23 May 2006 at the Santa Rosa City Council meeting. Everyone is invited.**



Background of Tombstone Amnesty (from <http://www.tombstoneamnesty.org>)

Tombstone Amnesty is designed to return lost or stolen tombstones to their rightful cemetery. We will accept, no questions asked, tombstones that someone has at their home or where ever. If the possessor knows where the tombstone came from, so much the better. If not, we will figure it out and return the tombstone.

Tombstone Amnesty is not a police organization. It is not our intention to go around questioning people as to the origin of the tombstone that happens to be in their back yard. We don't want people ratting on their neighbors. If someone has a tombstone and wants to keep it, fine. Tombstone Amnesty exists to take in unwanted tombstones, so they're not lost or destroyed forever.

If you know of a tombstone in northern California that wants to go home, please contact Tombstone Amnesty.

For more information, go to <http://www.sonomacountyhistory.org/>. Email to cemeterian@tombstoneamnesty.org.



Dues Reminder: Please pay your dues by June 30 2006: \$25 per year individual or family (one household); \$30 contributing (\$5 to book fund); \$200 lifetime

Your help is needed: We want to know what you want to hear about at our monthly meeting. We will be asking for suggestions of speakers and/or topics at the upcoming meetings. If you will not be at the meetings, but have ideas, please contact Lorel Kapke: lorelak@vom.com

A Change of Scenery: Starting September 2006, SCGS meetings will be held at Finley Center in Santa Rosa. There are a number of benefits to this change, including free parking and easier access to the building. More information will be provided in the June 2006 newsletter.

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Research Policy Statement: SCGS will do limited research 'lookups' for a \$5.00 fee, which includes an SASE, postage & handling, and up to 5 pages copied. Additional charges will be made for research of more than one hour or more than 5 copied pages.

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