

MARIN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

January 2018

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 1511, Novato, CA 94948-1511
Meetings: LDS Church, 220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2018

January 10: Writing Group Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
January 18: DNA Group Meeting, 7 p.m.
January 25: MCGS General Meeting, 7 p.m.
Feb. 3: MCGS Breakfast, Star Restaurant, 9 a.m.

Writing Group News

The next meeting of the Writing Group will be
Wednesday, January 10, 2018, 10:30 a.m.
FHC LDS Church, San Rafael

This month's assignment is to write about how the recent fires have affected you and yours—your reactions, how you felt. Come early to work on their genealogy at the Family History Center. Interested in the Writing Group? Contact [Susan Trumbull](#) or [Shirley Hudson](#).

DNA Group News

The next meeting of the DNA Group will be
Thursday, January 18, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
FHC LDS Church, San Rafael

A Q&A session will be followed by "Mapping DNA Segments to Help Figure Out Your Matches." We will discuss Chromosome Mapping and Painting, and Visual Phasing. Please visit our [DNA Group page](#) for more information!

MCGS General Meeting

Thursday, January 25, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
FHC LDS Church, San Rafael

Our General Meeting for January welcomes Robert Jackson, Ph.D. for the first of two presentations that will cover the Great Migration and researching German ancestors in both America and Germany! For details, please visit our [General Meeting page](#)!

"Beginning Genealogy with Jeff (Jeffrey Vaillant)" at San Rafael Public Library Meeting Room, every 2nd Tuesday, from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Please visit [SRPL Events Page](#) for details!

Saturday Breakfast, February 3, 2018, 9:00 a.m.

MCGS members and all beginners are invited for breakfast at 9:00 on the first Saturday each month at **Star Restaurant**, 1700 Novato Boulevard, Novato.

MCGS Research Trip, March 11-18, 2018

to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City!
Further details and registration information are on the website, including a [Sign-Up Flyer](#) with important details!. You may also contact [Will Deady](#) or [Susan Trumbull](#) for info.

SALT LAKE CITY!!!

Marin Mystery Location: Can you identify this Marin location? How about the year? **The answer is on the last page.** (Photo courtesy of Anne T. Kent California Room, Marin County Free Library.)



SAVE THE DATE!

"EUREKA!" Sacramento to be German Genealogy's Epicenter in 2019!

For three days, beginning on June 15, 2019, the second international conference of the International German Genealogy Partnership (IGGP) will be held in downtown Sacramento at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, hosted by the Sacramento German Genealogy Society supported by a consortium of Germanic Genealogy Societies across the Golden State. Details of the Sacramento conference will be posted when available at the [SGGS](#) host society website and on the [IGGP](#) partnership website!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sonoma County Genealogical Society will host a presentation by Jim and Marti Schein of *Schein & Schein Antique Maps & Prints* in San Francisco! Join SCGS for this very special General Meeting on Saturday, January 20, 2018 from noon to 2:30 p.m. in the Cypress Room at Finley Community Center, 2060 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa. Please see SCGS’s [General Meeting page](#) for details!

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The next **SF Bay Area Jewish Genealogical Society** General Meeting will take place Sunday, January 21, 2018 at **Oakland FHL**, 4766 Lincoln Avenue in Oakland. Doors open at 12:30 p.m., and the program begins at 1:00 p.m. The topic will be “*From DNA to Genetic Genealogy—Everything You Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask*,” with speaker Steve Morse. For further details, please see the [SFBAJGS calendar](#).

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California Genealogical Society will be celebrating their 120th Anniversary with Member Stories and birthday cake on Saturday, January 13, 2018 from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. at the **CGS Library**, 2201 Broadway, Suite LL2, in Oakland. This event is free to members, \$30 for non-members. To join the party, register online [here](#).

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Check Sutro Library’s **Bay Area Genealogy Calendar** at [this link](#) for more local happenings!

WEBINARS!

Southern California Genealogical Society is hosting a free 2018 Jamboree Webinar Extension Series that includes such fascinating topics as “*Free Land: Homesteading in the West*,” about the U.S. Homestead Act! As indicated by the series title, these webinars are presented in anticipation of the SoCal Society’s upcoming Jamboree from May 31 to June 2, 2018. To learn more, visit their [web site](#).

Legacy Family Tree has recently posted their list of ever-popular Free Webinars for 2018! Upcoming topics will be covering how to “*Start Your Online Family Tree*“ on MyHeritage, “*Introducing the Geni World Family Tree*,” and “*Understanding DNA Matching Technology*.” To learn more about these webinars and to register, visit the [Family Tree Webinars](#) page!

MCGS Members Journal

**“Wait...Are My Kids Russian?”
by Sierra Pope**

(Here is an article, slightly edited, that was posted to Sierra Pope’s web log, [Up In The Tree](#) on August 13, 2017.)

Our trip to Finland this summer was incredible for so many reasons, my favorite being connecting with extended family on my husband’s side. Another important part of the trip was learning more about Scandinavian history. Specifically, this year is the 100-year anniversary of Finland as a country. The Republic of Finland, as we know it today, gained independence from Russia in December 1917.

The area has a long history, though. After the middle ages, Finland became part of Sweden. It remained this way until the early 1700s when Sweden and Russia began to take turns controlling the area. Russian forces occupied Finland twice in the first half of the 1700s. Sweden once again regained control of the area by 1743. Also, by this time the area was called Finland by both the Swedish and the Russians.

The Finnish War of 1808-1809 ended with Finland being taken over by Russia once again. It was declared the Grand Duchy of Finland in 1809. This was an autonomous part of Russia. Finland was okay with this arrangement until Alexander III took the Russian throne in 1881. He began a period of “Russification.” My husband’s relatives explained this time as Russia remembering they owned Finland, and they began to exploit it. Men were required to spend time in the Russian Army, the Finnish economy was overtaken by Russians, towns were renamed after Russians, etc. The worst of it came in 1899 when Russia declared Russian Law as the law of the land.

The Russian Revolution occurred in 1917. Finland took the opportunity to declare their independence and create the Republic of Finland.

So what does this history have to do with my children? A lot. My husband’s 2nd great-grandparents, Charles Mattson and Wendla Batmaster, both immigrated to the San Francisco area from Ostrobothnia at the turn of the century. Both left Finland due to hard economic times under Russian rule. Both were born in the 1880s and both identified as Finnish.

So, are my kids Russian or Finnish?

When looking at history, technically they were Russian since Finland was part of Russia. Deep history would indicate they were Swedish. Sweden had control of the land area first. So maybe my kids are Finnish Russian Swedes? Haha! Just kidding.

The answer is no. Your identity is not always rooted in the dates of history. My kids' immigrant ancestors came from families who had lived in Finland for hundreds of years. We know Finland was referred to as Finland and the people as Finnish since the late 1600s. The families identified as Finnish even during Russian rule. My kids are part Finnish.

 **CALLING ALL WRITERS!!!** Share your stories and blog postings in the *MCGS Members Journal!* Send them to your [Newsletter Editor!](#)

EDITORIAL

Cemeteries, New-Year's Resolutions, and 10,000 Steps A Day

Most people who make New-Year's resolutions include "losing weight" or "getting more fit" on their lists. Many of those people wear pedometers or FitBit-type devices to help them get in the 10,000 steps a day of walking that is recommended for fitness.

We genealogists spend an awful lot of time in chairs looking at computers and books. Health advocates have begun to call sitting "the new smoking" because excessive time spent on our bums is known to present ergonomic risks and contribute to an unhealthy sedentary lifestyle.

Of course, we can abandon our desks and library tabletops once in a while to conduct research at historic sites and museums, or go for walks while listening to educational podcasts. Or, we can increase our footstep tally while simultaneously adding to the fund of online information about gravesites in our own neighborhoods!

Two popular websites can provide us with specific motivation to get us out the door and onto the lawns and hillsides of cemeteries. One is [Find-A-Grave](#); the other is [Billion Graves](#). Both are crowd-sourced, and volunteer contributors can register for free on both sites.

Find-A-Grave is the older of the two, having begun in 1998, and it is better known chiefly due to

its partnership with, and now ownership by, Ancestry. The formatting and user interface of Find-A-Grave is straightforward and fairly simple. Contributors enter information about cemeteries, deceased persons, and grave sites, subject to the approval of Find-A-Grave staff members.

Despite its name, the newer website Billion Graves has only a small percentage of the number of memorials that Find-A-Grave has, but it is much more high-tech, with videos, tutorials, and its own photo app. Unlike the older site, Billion Graves offers the option of a paid subscription that allows for personalization including a member website, record notifications, and formation of a tree called a "family plot."

For the purposes of physical fitness, both sites include "photo requests" that you can volunteer to fulfill. For Find-A-Grave, you can use any digital camera. Billion Graves requires photo submissions through its app so that each grave includes GPS. Regardless of where, or for whom, you wish to go grave-scouting, you will encounter lots of uneven terrain, gopher mounds, and a high percentage of unmarked gravesites. Many times, your cemetery outings will yield no tombstone photos for online memorials, but you are sure to get plenty of exercise!

BLOG SPOT

Looking for a blog about a specific topic? Check out [Genealogy Blog Finder](#), which has an immensely useful search function that can help you locate blogs by subject, region, or even surnames!

Lisa Louise Cooke's [Genealogy Gems](#) blog is starting 2018 with an explosion of useful content on from her excellent team of bloggers, on a brand-new website. These including the article "*New Year, New Records for Genealogy!*" that focuses upon new records from England that are available at Findmypast, newly available records from Greater Manchester (great news for Vernon and myself!—*Ed.*), plus news about records from Scotland, Ireland, and even Palestine! Other recent Gems posts include "*DNA Testing News: 2017 Year In Review*," and a special article for writers, "*6 Tips to Create Family History Books They Can't Put Down*." The new Genealogy Gems site still has all of Lisa's popular free and premium content, such as her wonderful Podcast!

MORE BLOGS

Speaking of British records, a recent article on the [LegacyTree Genealogists](#) blog, “*Ordering Records from the General Register Office of England and Wales*,” explains how to register for an account with the GRO to help you locate and obtain vital information and records that are gleaned from the notoriously vague British indexes. Other interesting recent postings to the LegacyTree blog include “*Genealogy Research Goals for the New Year*” and “*Holiday Traditions from Around the World*.”

Dr. Leah Larkin of [The DNA Geek](#) blog has begun a new series of posts that start with “*Science the Heck Out of Your DNA—Part 1*,” in which she and a couple of other experts tackle the question of how to use existing DNA matches to decide which branch of a tree to target first.

Roberta Estes of DNAeXplained has declared 2017 “[The Year of DNA](#)” in her year-end blog article, in which she discusses the growth of the DNA market, advances in privacy protection and security, and education about DNA, plus a glance at what’s in store for 2018!

Delving even further into geek-dom, Tamura Jones’ highly informative tech-world blog, Modern Software Experience, has an excellent, detailed run-down of developments in genealogical software over the past year, along with a look ahead, in the article “[Genealogy 2017](#).”

The [FamilySearch blog](#) features “*18 Writing Tips for 2018: How to Tell Personal and Family Stories with Confidence*.” Between the “6 tips” from the Gems blog to the 18 featured on FamilySearch, there are ample ideas out there to fuel our writing (and don’t forget to submit your stories for this newsletter)!

Recent web-logging from [Amy Johnson Crow](#) includes yet another article to further increase our tech-savviness, “*How Hashtags Can Help Your Genealogy*,” in which she explains how they can provide a better focus for social-media content. Amy also has a top-10 list of genealogy tips to share, along with ideas for “*Getting More From Newspaper Research*” and information from James Beidler on “*Finding German Ancestors*.” In general, Amy’s blog is worth a visit any time!

Solution to the January 2018 Mystery Location:

The building in this photograph is the present George Gustafson Gymnasium at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. The photo was taken not long after it was built in 1923, at which time the building served as Wood Auditorium, named after Tam High’s first principal, E. E. Wood. Tam students helped build the auditorium because the school board refused to finance it. “Gus Gym,” as it is called today, is still in active use after a seismic upgrade in 1994 and a renovation in 2006. This gym was used for the sock-hop in the 1973 film, *American Graffiti*.

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