

# *THE LIVE OAK*

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November/December 2013

Oakland, California

## **NOVEMBER MEETING**

Wednesday, November 13, 2013 - 10 a.m. in the Oakland Family History Library Meeting Room

### **EXPLORING GENEALOGY UNCOVERS SURPRISES - Speaker: Joan Morris**

Joan Morris is a journalist on staff at the Bay Area Newspaper Group. A newspaper article about the dedication of a statue in Boonville, MO, sent to her by an uncle, turned up many surprises. Joan has been most generous to accept our invitation to visit us and tell us about her trip to Missouri, a family reunion, and some amazing information she has been able to uncover in her family tree.

*HAPPY THANKSGIVING EVERYONE !*

## **DECEMBER MEETING**

Wednesday, December 11, 2013 - 10 a.m. in the Oakland Family History Library Meeting Room

### **ANNUAL CHRISTMAS COOKIE PARTY**

Ho, Ho, Ho! Time to dust off the cookie sheet, rummage through that recipe book and mix up a batch of your favorite cookies to share with members at our annual Cookie Exchange. This is always a fun and enjoyable holiday event.

We are also asking that you bring an artifact or a photograph relating to your family tree and tell us about it. It is always fun and inspiring to share family stories.

Looking forward to all those delicious cookies and to seeing many of you at our December Meeting!

# *WISHING EVERYONE A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS*

## *MAY THE NEW YEAR BRING YOU JOY, PROSPERITY, LESS BRICK WALLS, AND MORE EXCITING DISCOVERIES!*

**Looking back at September:** Our program on Rosie the Riveter certainly drew a lot of members and guests. Lucien Sonder provided an informative overview of The WWII Home Front National Historical Park and their wonderful "Rosie's Girls" summer program for young girls. Thank goodness this was scheduled for September before our government "went on vacation"!

**Looking Back at October:** Patrick Lofft provided many useful suggestions for "Searching Beyond the Census"...or, where to look to back up and follow up on information found in the census. The 1890 Veterans Census, Fold3 for military records, city directories found on Ancestry.com, Google newspaper archives and Google Books, and Findagrave.com were only some of the resources that may provide further information on your ancestors.

### **EBGS NEWS:**

We are working on programs for the upcoming year. Some suggestions were: Organizing Your Files and Records and Culling Your Files. Information we could all benefit from, I'm sure! Finding someone to put on such a program is a challenge and any suggestions would certainly be welcome! If you have any ideas or suggestions for future programs please contact Carolyn Storm - she will be most delighted to hear from you.

Please make the following corrections to your recent Roster:

Jean Christie: Add phone number: (510) 530-0736

Carolyn Sherfy: new address: 641 Central Park Place, Brentwood, CA 94513

Phone number and email remain the same.

### **IN MEMORIUM:**

We are saddened to inform you that our President, Sally Stevens, lost her husband on September 26, 2013. We extend our deepest sympathy to Sally and her family.

David Stevens was born in Safford, AZ November 18, 1931. He earned a BS in Applied Mathematics from the California Institute of Technology, and Masters from U. C. Berkeley, and later, a PhD. While in the Navy he reached the rank of Lieutenant. He loved all kinds of music, travelling, games and puzzles. He worked for many years as a computer programmer at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. Dave and Sally were married for 53 years and had one son, one daughter and two grandchildren.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS - Mark your calendars**

#### **Oakland Family History Library**

In addition to the regular monthly classes and workshops listed below, the Oakland FHC offers many free classes throughout the year. Check their website - [www.oaklandfhc.org](http://www.oaklandfhc.org)

#### **Oakland FHC Free Classes and Workshops - No Pre-registration Required**

African-American Research Workshop	4th Wednesday each month	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
MacGen Workshop	2nd Wednesday each month	10 am
MacGen Meeting	3rd Saturday each month	1:30 pm

**Ancestry Day - San Francisco 2013:** Presented by California Genealogical Society and Ancestry.com. Saturday, November 9, 2013 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Hyatt Regency San Francisco, 5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA. Check their website for further information: [CaliforniaAncestors.org](http://CaliforniaAncestors.org)

**San Mateo County Genealogical Society:** Fall Seminar, Saturday, November 2, 2013, Featured speaker, Curt Witcher. For more information: [www.smcgs.org](http://www.smcgs.org)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

**Ohio Research:** Visit the Ohio State Library's Digital and Special Collections page for a list of links to materials relevant to genealogical research. Check the library's very helpful guide to Genealogical and Historical Sources in Ohio State Documents which is located at:

<http://library.ohio.gov/sites/default/files/Ohio.docs.gen.sources.pdf>

Ohio Digital Resource Commons <http://drc.ohiolink.edu/> includes materials from universities and colleges throughout the state. Be sure to click on the links to the individual universities that participate or you will miss the majority of the collections.

**Looking for Newspaper archives Online?:** [Wikipedia.com](http://Wikipedia.com) has a lengthy list of online newspaper archives to choose from. Foreign, U. S. or individual states, or cities, take your choice. Most have a notation as to whether they are Free or you must Pay (subscribe) and mention the dates available. It is certainly worth your time to browse!

## **GATHERING OF PEARLS**

One day I had a pearl dropped into my hands. It was a log of sailing journeys, the name of the ships and destinations around the world with some comments. This log had been written by my granddaughter's great, great grandfather, Frederick Thomas Hall. In 1809 at the age of seventy-nine years he wrote his journal, he noted, "for the benefit of my family."

Frederick Thomas Hall's journal told of his ship sinking in a disastrous storm off the shore of England, where only he and his father made it to shore before his father died. Another time on another ship, Frederick, his captain and his captain's son escaped a sinking ship off Halifax, Nova Scotia and of the three, only he survived.

After returning to England, Frederick decided to go back to Halifax, visit the family he had stayed with and claim the young daughter, Didamia, as his bride. Eventually Frederick Hall settled in Rockport, Massachusetts.

I interviewed grandpa, Col. Robert M. Hall, who remembered his grandfather. Bob supplied me with copies of the log and the story of Fred and his bride, Didamia. Other bits of information included were a few pictures and his own military record.

On a visit to Salt Lake City, I studied city directories and census records. The information helped me put together a small booklet for my granddaughter, her aunts, uncle and cousins. After that I made another booklet on Col. Robert Hall and his becoming a doctor while in the military.

Writing small stories brings people to life and you begin to feel you know them. So try writing about what you have learned about your ancestors a little bit at a time. Submitted by Barbara Parkin.

*The information on the next two pages are "gleaned" from San Luis Obispo County Genealogical Society's Bulletin, Nov. 2013.*

# The Records of Death

by Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL

Posted on her blog (<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/2013/04/24/the-records-of-death/>) on April 24, 2013

## Coroner's reports

There are 110 pages for January 1906. One hundred and seven pages for February. One hundred and one pages for March. And each of those books has at least one blank page at the end.

And then comes the book that slaps you upside the head — that makes you sit up and take notice. Something changed, you can't help but think. Something big changed.

And then it hits you — just what it was that changed in April 1906.

April 1906... in San Francisco.

Yep, The Legal Genealogist was poking around the records again, and came across the San Francisco County death reports, made and kept by the Coroner's Office.

Each sheet bears a header: Death Report, Coroner's Office. Plus the date and a page number. The date received. Time received. Name of the person and address of the person reporting the case. The name, address and personal information of the deceased. Time of death or when found dead. Place of death. Presumable cause. When the body was received at the morgue. Whether there was an inquest and the verdict if so. An autopsy certificate. A place for a list of witnesses.

And on one side of the two-sided reports, a section for a history of the case:

"Deceased was shot a few days ago," reads the history section for the report of the death of Soichi Namaya on the first of April 1906.<sup>1</sup>

"Deceased ... went to step from the scow Shasta and made a misstep ... and fell into the water where she was Drowned," reads the history for the death report of Mary Ayscough on the second of April.<sup>2</sup>

"Deceased has been sick about 10 days they had no doctor to attend to the Child," reads the history for the death report of two-year-old Ah Fook on April 12th.<sup>3</sup>

The stories told by the pages are many. The mother, despondent over the loss of a child, who took her own life. The worker who fell from a

windmill in Golden Gate Park. The heavy drinker who took one drink too many. The infant suffocated in his parents' bed. The old man run down by a baker's cart in the street. The young mother lost in childbirth. The sudden heart attacks. The deaths that must have been the reliefs from long and painful illnesses.

Each death carefully documented. One by one, recorded in detail, day in and day out, one or two — at most a handful — in any given day.

And then came the 18th of April.

The earliest tremor hit at 5:12 a.m., and what has been called the Great Earthquake — centering in San Francisco — hit 20-25 seconds later.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey:

The earthquake was felt from southern Oregon to south of Los Angeles and inland as far as central Nevada. ... The frequently quoted value of 700 deaths caused by the earthquake and fire is now believed to underestimate the total loss of life by a factor of 3 or 4. Most of the fatalities occurred in San Francisco, and 189 were reported elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

And the death records abruptly changed.

"No. A, male," reads the report at page 42 of the first of three books required to record the dead of April 1906.<sup>5</sup> "No. D, male," reads the report at page 46, for a body found in the Valencia Hotel.<sup>6</sup> "Jno. Doe McKenzie," reads the report at page 50 of a body found at 115 Haight Street, the cause of death a fractured skull.<sup>7</sup> "John Doe F" died on Dillon Place of asphyxiation.<sup>8</sup> John Doe P, a male around age 40, also died of a fractured skull; the location wasn't even recorded.<sup>9</sup> "John Doe Louis (works for Paladinio Fish Market)" bled to death.<sup>10</sup>

Almost nothing was recorded about some of the dead. Only "John Doe, male" is recorded for one man.<sup>11</sup> Another "John Doe" died at 3rd and Brannan Streets.<sup>12</sup> Another on 6th Street between Mission and Howard.<sup>13</sup> A "Jane Doe" at 3rd and Brannan.<sup>14</sup>

Not all the dead were nameless. William Carr died of asphyxiation at 1547 Ellis Street.<sup>15</sup> Max

Fenner, a 38-year-old German-born married police officer, died of a fractured skull.<sup>16</sup> That was also the cause of death for Lena Crowder, a 41-year-old widow from Sweden, who died at 14 Seventh Street.<sup>17</sup>

Most have nothing written in the history section. Where there is a note, it is often heartbreakingly sad. "Found with husband & Baby," reads the note for the death of "Jane Doe Johnson," who died of a fractured skull at the Valencia Hotel.<sup>18</sup> "Found with parents," says the note for "Baby Johnson," who died of asphyxiation.<sup>19</sup> "Jane Doe Girl" died at 5th and Howard Streets, and the note reads: "Probably of Desmond family."<sup>20</sup> The same was recorded for another "Jane Doe Girl" on the following page,<sup>21</sup> and yet another "Jane Doe Girl" on the page after that.<sup>22</sup>

By the third April book, the records are chilling. "Bones, Part of one person," reads one record, found at the northwest corner of Howard and Seventh Streets.<sup>23</sup> The dates stretch into May for the date received, but the date of death remains the same. "Human bones," received May 8th, from April 18, 1906.<sup>24</sup> Bones, found on 5th Street

between Tehama and Clementina Streets,<sup>25</sup> It isn't until the very end of Book C that the death date moves beyond April 18th, and even then the record couldn't be completed until much later. Henry Manders, a native of Holland, married, age 82, died of shock on the 22nd of April. His death was recorded on the 15th of May.<sup>26</sup>

But still the deaths of April 18th rolled in. "Human Bones supposed to be Fred H. Stanley." "Chinese Bones Found on Dupont St. 135 ft. north of Washington rear of lot."<sup>28</sup> "Human Bones supposed to be Louis Stambler... 34... Celia Stambler... 30... Rosie Stambler... 10..."<sup>29</sup>

And page after page of handwritten notes in the back of the last book. "Louise Manks, 12 years Elizabeth Marks, 8. Found in the ruins of 179 7th St. by their father."<sup>30</sup> "Denis T. Sullivan - Chief S.F. Fire Department. April 22nd. Extensive burn sustained during the earthquake and fire April 18th."<sup>31</sup> "Annie M. Petrig - 9 days died April 20th of exposure in camp at Presidio foll. earthquake and fire."<sup>32</sup> "Margaret Miles 7 months April 20th Cause of death unknown. Probably due to exposure foll. earthquake and fire."<sup>33</sup>

## SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> San Francisco County, California, Coroner's Death Record Book A (April 1906): 3, Soichi Namaya, 1 April 1906; digital images, "California, San Francisco County Records, 1824-1997," FamilySearch.org (<https://familysearch.org/>; accessed 23 Apr 2013); citing California, San Francisco County Records, 1824-1997, San Francisco Public Library.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 4, Mary Ayscough, 2 April 1906.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 24, Ah Fook, 12 April 1906.
- <sup>4</sup> "The Great 1906 San Francisco Earthquake," USGS, Earthquake Hazards Program, USGS.gov (<http://earthquake.usgs.gov>; accessed 23 Apr 2013).
- <sup>5</sup> San Francisco Co., Cal., Coroner's Death Record Book A (April 1906): 42, 18 April 1906.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 46.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 50.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 51.
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 74.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 84.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 8.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 39.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 58.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 78.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 52.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 54.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 60.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 63.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., Book A (April 1906): 64.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 32.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 33.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., Book B (April 1906): 34.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 40.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 58.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 64.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 94.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 130.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 135.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 138.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 145.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., Book C (April 1906): 147.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA - A Thumbnail Sketch

Considered part of the Greater Los Angeles Area, Ventura County is located in southern California on the Pacific Coast. Originally, the area was home to the Chumash tribe of Native Americans.

The area has been occupied by Spain and then Mexico prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which formally transferred California to the United States in 1848.

Ventura County was incorporated in 1873 and was formerly the southern part of Santa Barbara County. The county seat is the city of Ventura (officially known as San Buenaventura). As of the 2010 census, the population was 823,318.

Ventura county is well known for its sugar beet factories and oil refineries.

The northern section of the county has some of the most rugged and inaccessible wilderness area remaining in California and all part of the Las Padres National Forest.

County Clerk and Records Office  
800 South Ventura Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
Ph: 805-654-2263 - County Clerk  
Ph: 805-654-3665 - Records Office

Museum of Ventura County  
100 East Main Street  
Ventura, CA 93009  
Ph: 805-653-0323  
Hrs: Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The museum's research library has an extensive collection spanning the history of Ventura County, city directories, biographies, manuscripts, newspapers of the county, maps, historical photographs, postcards, etc.

Ventura County Library  
646 County Square Drive  
Ventura, CA 93003  
Ph: 805-477-7331

Learn more:

*Pioneers of Arroyo Grande, CA* - by Patricia Loomis and Nary Mueller  
*The Letters of Jose Senan O.F.M. Mission San Buenaventura 1796 - 1823* by Lesley Editor Simpson  
*Santa Susana* - Images of America/Arcadia Publ. - by Bill Appleton  
*Ventura County Veterans - WWII to Vietnam* - Images of America/Arcadia Publ. - by Jeanette Jauregui