

MT. DIABLO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

The Digger



March/April 2016

2015/16 MDGS BOARD MEMBERS



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Remember New Meeting Time and Location

In order to avoid the crowded parking issues at Creekside Clubhouse, and to give our speakers less of a late afternoon commute on Fridays, we have implemented the following changes.

New Meeting Time:
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Meeting Place:
Fairway Room, Creekside Clubhouse

Welcome to Our New Members

Alan & Eleanor Clark

Mary Anne Clark

Lora L. Ferrante

Belinda B. Hylinski

Diana W. King

Kathy Lopez

Martha (Marcy) Mierzwa

Richard Paul

William Janney Steinmetz

Harvey Williams

For questions or information about MDGS, please contact
Stan Wells at stanwells@sbcglobal.net.

President's Message

By Stan Wells

The new format and time for our monthly meetings has been greeted with enthusiasm by all who have attended the January and February meetings. Everyone was pleased with the classroom style set up with the convenience of tables to use for note taking. This arrangement also allows for better handling of the coffee and refreshments during the break time. Convening at 10 AM has certainly gone a long way in relieving the parking issue.

I hope those members that have not yet attended a meeting this year will make a point to do so and see how much this new arrangement improves the value of the get-togethers. The idea of having a presentation by one of our members aimed at basics - coupled with a guest speaker's presentation on broader subjects is working well. One of the major benefits has been the opportunity to have much more dialogue and discussion about specific issues that members may have. I think you will be pleased – if you come and join us.

The nominating committee has made good progress in putting a talented and enthusiastic slate together for presentation at our May meeting. There are, however, still some important activities that need help. Specifically more assistance is wanted on the newly created hospitality committee. If you are willing to lend a hand, please talk to Diane de Golia, me or one of the other nominating committee members.

You can volunteer to support the organization by contacting any of these committee members and tell them that you are willing to help. They can be reached by email or phone at the following:

- Diane de Golia – longolia@excite.com – 944-9330
- Laura Sanchez – laura3627@gmail.com – 946-1620
- Margaret Ready – mready001@yahoo.com – 954-8293
- Gayle Schiller – gayle.schiller@dmil.com – 932-2331
- Stan Wells – stanwells@sbcglobal.net – 946-9418

Also, if you are asked to help the organization, please respond positively. Keep in mind that the future of the Genealogy Society very much depends upon your participation.

MDGS Publicity Committee

The Mt. Diablo Genealogy Society web site is up and running. It can be found at <http://mdgs.webs.com/>. We urge you to visit it often and see what there is to learn on it.

Also, MDGS now has a Facebook page, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/mdgensoc/>. Check it out and click LIKE.

Genealogy on TV

There is a plethora of shows currently appearing on TV or scheduled to begin soon.

Finding Your Roots with Henry Louis Gates Jr. is currently airing on Tuesdays at 8 PM on PBS. If you want to watch shows that have already aired, you can find the full episodes on the show's website.

Long Lost Family is airing Sundays at 10 PM on TLC.

Who Do You Think You Are is premiering Sunday, April 3 at 9 PM on TLC. ([see the celebrity guest lineup here](#)).

Genealogy Roadshow has announced its Season 3 premiere, which airs Tuesday, May 17 on PBS. In its four episodes it will visit Boston, Miami, Houston, and Los Angeles.

MDGS Program Committee

Kay Speaks, our speaker this month, is talking about passenger lists, and what can be found in them. They can provide a link back from your relative's arrival back to their country of origin. Speaks will explain how to interpret the strange annotations and other markings shown on such passenger lists and ship manifests; information that may lead to a researcher finding that missing ancestor.

Member of the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society and the California Genealogical Society and Library, Speaks leads seminars throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, coordinates workshops and is a reporter for the Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society's newsletter "Roots Tracer".

Our mini-speaker, Diane de Golia will talk about the Allen County Library, what can be found there, and how to use it to augment your research.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Speaker	Mini Speaker
March 18, 2016: Kay Speaks – Passenger Lists	Diane de Golia – Allen County Library
April 15, 2016 Diane George – How to do a Google Search	Earl Abbe – Find a Grave
May 20, 2016	
June 17, 2016	
July 15, 2016: Gena Ortega – Genealogy Roadshow	

MDGS Membership Committee

RENEWAL REMINDER



MDGS Members it's that time of year for membership renewal.

If you've enjoyed the information you've received from our Society in 2015, we hope you will join us again in 2016. Programs during the coming year presented by expert genealogy guest speakers will provide information on such diverse topics as Find A Grave, using passenger lists, Google searching and the Genealogy Roadshow.

We have also implemented our new meeting format which will bring about more member interaction and sharing of questions and research.

Members also receive *The Digger*, the club's newsletter that is filled with helpful information for the genealogist.

Please complete and mail your application to our new mailing address: Mt. Diablo Genealogy, 1001 Golden Rain Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595, drop it off at our Gateway mailbox, or bring it to the next meeting. Checks may be made out to MDGS.

RENEWAL DEADLINE: *To continue receiving *The Digger*, renewal dues must be paid no later than March 18th.*



Mt. Diablo
Genealogical
Society

2016 Membership Application

Your membership runs from January through December.

Please Print Clearly

New Member _____ Renewal _____

Name _____

Address _____
_____ Rossmoor? _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Individual membership \$20 [] Family Membership \$25 [] \$ _____

Additional Donation..... \$ _____

Total amount paid \$ _____

Dues entitle you to attend monthly MDGS meetings and to receive The Digger newsletter. Please attach your payment and send to **Mt. Diablo Genealogical Society, 1001 Golden Rain Road, Walnut Creek, CA 94595**, or you can drop off applications at the Rossmoor Administration Bldg., or bring with you to the monthly meeting.

MEMBER INFORMATION

Surnames and locations you are researching:

MDGS has my permission to publish **my name, contact info and surnames/locations** I'm researching in The Digger and in the MDGS member directory on our website. [] YES [] NO

Would you be interested in participating in a "Hands On" workshop to learn new ways to organize your research online? [] YES

Would you be interested in "One on One" clinics to help with brick walls or problems? [] YES

Would you be interested in serving or volunteering? [] YES

[] Board [] Publicity [] Programs [] Membership [] Digger [] Hospitality

MDGS News

The Society needs your help!

The organization is separated into committees so that administration activities can be divided over a larger portion of the membership.

We need your participation in the following committees. The idea is to break-down the committee's activities into small tasks that will not put a heavy chore on any single individual.

Please signify that you are willing to lend a hand in a small way to keep the Society working for all.

Add your name alongside one or more of the following committees that you are willing to support.

PUBLICITY:

PROGRAMS:

MEMBERSHIP:

HOSPITALITY:

DIGGER:

Your contact information:

PHONE:

EMAIL:



A Learning Moment

Soundex

What is it?

According to NARA (National Archives & Records Administration), Soundex is a coded surname (last name) index based on the way a surname sounds rather than the way it is spelled. Surnames that sound the same but are spelled differently, like SMITH and SMYTH, have the same code. The Soundex coding system was developed so to help find a surname that may have been recorded under one of various spellings.

Every Soundex code consists of a letter and three numbers, such as W-252. (The code can be written with or without the dash). The letter is always the first letter of the surname. The numbers are assigned to the remaining letters of the surname according to the Soundex guide.

Why use it?

The data in all the census records currently available was collected by enumerators, who wrote down people's names phonetically. So, it is not surprising that a family name would be spelled differently by different enumerators in different census years. Using an exact spelling search you may not find your ancestor in a particular census. If you try the same name, using Soundex you may have better results.

How to find the code

The basic rules for translating a name into a Soundex code are fairly simple, but there are many rules for handling all the possible conditions: double letters (code as one letter), two different adjacent consonants with the same code number (code as one letter), etc.

Fortunately, the RootsWeb site has a soundex converter. Go to www.rootsweb.com, Under "Other Tools and Resources" you will find "Soundex Converter. Click on that entry. On that page all you need to do is enter the surname and RootsWeb returns the Soundex code for that name and also lists a number of other names that share that same code.

I tried it and learned that the Soundex code for Wolf is W410, which is also the code for Welby, Wilby, Wolfe, Wolff, Woolf, and Wulf. More interesting is my mother's maiden name, Eisen. That code is E250, which also represents Eagan, Eakin, Eason, Egan, Eshom, and Exum.

One drawback to Soundex is that it is based on the first letter of the surname. In the example above, if Eisen had been recorded as Isen, the code would have been I250.

What's the code for your surname?

From Other Sources

From Lisa Louise Cooke's Genealogy Gems

Findmypast.com has published an enormous new index to [Irish Parish Records](#) (1670-1900). The index has 40 million names from 1000 parishes across all 32 counties of Ireland and links to [digitized content at the National Library of Ireland](#) (which is free but browse-only).

According to Findmypast, parish records are "the most important resource for Irish ancestors prior to the 1901 census, allowing researchers to trace their roots back to Pre-Famine Ireland."

Beginning Irish Genealogy: Tips to Get Started

It can be intimidating to start researching Irish genealogy. I asked Brian Donovan, Head of Irish Data and Development at Findmypast, to answer 3 key questions:

Q: How do I know if I'm ready to "cross the pond" back to Ireland? What information should I have?

A: Before looking through Irish records...you'll want to know as much as you can about the origins of your immigrant Irish ancestor. Obviously you'll need to know their name and date of birth, but the really key piece of information is their place of birth - that's absolutely essential, especially if you have a common last name. At minimum, you would need to know the county, but knowing the parish or townland is even more helpful. With our new parish records, however, it's much more possible to make progress knowing only the county. Additionally, knowing the names of other family members, such as their parents or siblings, will also help locate your Irish family before they left.



Q: What are the first Irish records I should search? Does that change by time period?

A: It definitely depends on the time period. If you know your ancestors migrated after 1901, that's easy - start with the [1901 Census of Ireland](#). If they left Ireland prior to that, focus on the [civil registers of births](#) and of course the [parish records](#). Civil registration began in 1864, so if they [left] before that, your best option is to look in the parish records and land records (like [Griffith's Valuation](#)). This is why we're so thrilled to be releasing these parish records: a huge portion of Irish emigrated before 1864, so prior to this release the only major record sets to work with were land records (though there are others that can be helpful too).

Q: What language or languages should I expect to encounter in Irish records?

A: Mostly English, but some parish registers are in Latin, the official language of the Catholic Church during the time period the records span. Irish was widely spoken and many people could only speak Irish, but the language was never used in official records.

From Other Sources

From Ancestry Magazine (February Issue)

Love and Marriage: Finding the Story

You've got the marriage record. It includes the names and dates. But that isn't very romantic. What was their story? Where did they meet? How long did they date before they married? You may not be able to learn all of the details, but often a close examination of the records you've found and a few additional resources may help paint the picture.

Ask Family

First and foremost, if there are family members who may know anything about the couple, ask them now. Reach out to extended family. You never know if a wedding picture or story was passed down a different family line.

Newspapers

Weddings were major social events that were often reported in great detail in old newspapers, and with sites like Newspapers.com adding new digitized papers every day, your chances of finding your ancestor's wedding announcement get better all the time. It wasn't unusual for wedding accounts to include guest lists, descriptions of bridal gowns, bridesmaids' dresses, floral arrangements, food served, gifts given, and where the couple honeymooned. No matter what your ancestor's social status, you may get lucky and find a clipping like this one from a suburban Chicago newspaper. The account described the décor in the home, the bride's gown, and the reception where "the tables fairly groaned under the bountiful supper which had been prepared." Even the bridal table is described as "nicely decorated in smilax, ferns, bouquets of roses and carnations." The article brings everything to life, saying that "from 9 till 11 pm, the wedding company were pleasantly serenaded by a company of nine who kept up a terrific up-roar with sleigh bells, cow bells, guns and milk cans." We even learn that after a honeymoon in Texas, "Mr. and Mrs. Pierce will return and live on their farm near Meacham." Wouldn't it be great if every wedding was chronicled in such detail?

Check for Anniversary Announcements

Look for milestone anniversary announcements in the social pages of newspapers as well. You may find details about the wedding, where it was held, and how the couple met. The Hammond Times of 8 May 1939 included this photo of the well-liked couple, along with eight paragraphs describing the celebration and some insights into where they met and were married. "Ora Ebert and the Rev. Cross were married in Knox, Ind. Mrs. Cross is a graduate of Angola College of Music. The couple met in Knox where Mrs. Cross was then teaching music and he was doing evangelistic work."

MDGS Calendar

Friday, March 15, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Creekside Clubhouse, Rossmoor

Speaker: Kay Speaks

Program: "Passenger Lists"

Friday, April 19, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Creekside Clubhouse, Rossmoor

Speaker: Diane George

Program: How to Do A Google Search

Lunch with our Speaker

Each month (except August and December), members and guests are invited to attend lunch with that month's speaker, held at 12:30 a.m. at the Creekside Grill. Lunch reservations need to be made by the Thursday before the meeting. Contact Susan Rush at 925-674-0929 or e-mail her at gen4you@astound.net.



MDGS

**1001 Golden Rain Road
Walnut Creek, CA 94595**