

THE FAMILY SNOOP

MERCED COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 34, No. 08

SEPTEMBER 2016

September 2016 Meeting



**Sheila
Ruiz
Harrell:**

**Early Hispanic
Settlers in
Merced &
Fresno Counties**

1:00 p.m. Saturday

September 17, 2016

Gracey Room, Merced County Library

July Meeting: Birthday Celebration Member Show & Tell

We started off this meeting with recognizing years of membership in the Merced County Genealogical Society on five year increments. We also acknowledged the past presidents of the society that were present.



Pictured left to right: Shari Stetson, Stephanie McLeod, Anne Field, Nancy Tingey, Roberta Saling

After refreshments, some of our members shared their progress in their family history research, including bringing artifacts for us to enjoy.



Allison Scott shared some ledger accounts and meeting notes from 1944 through the 1950's of the Western Dairyman's Association she found while she was cleaning out.

Ken Hope shared a story from his

Sherwood Revolutionary War ancestors, specifically a transcribed letter from Mrs. E. H. Haddock of Peoria, Ill, dated May 27, 1881:

My dear cousins:

My remembrances of our Grandfather Sherwood's family date back, by hearsay, to the commencement of the Revolution. From my grandfather's sister, Mrs. Sarah Adams, an intelligent widow lady, who visited his home frequently, I learned much of its history.

At that time, her oldest brother, Thomas, about 25 years of age read in his Bible, as he said, "Fear God and honor the king?" and so he went to Canada,

evinced his loyalty, and was commissioned major in a British regiment, and subsequently married into a noble family.

Adiel, our grandfather, four years younger, espoused the cause of the people, and was made captian [sic] of a colonial company. One incident of his soldier-life, I must mention, for it comes to mind as one of his oft-told stories. Having been taken prisoner, with other captives, to Montreal, he petitioned his brother Thomas for aid for himself and men. The reply to his appeal was returned, with this report, "I know not a brother who is an enemy to King George", but enclosed was his wife's address, and from this source the captives were favored in many ways during their two years imprisonment.

Our grandfather, Adiel Sherwood, a soldier-lover, was married to his second cousin, Sarah Sherwood, and when he entered the service, he left her at her father's at Poughkeepsie, at which place their first child, Mary, my mother, afterward Mrs. Fellows was born. It was this daughter who was married in a bridal robe formed from the silk flag of her father's regiment. Doubly cherished for its associations the sacred relic was preserved in the family.

John Carlos shared the following family story from his father's side:

During the storm off of Ireland at the time of the Spanish Armada, his ancestor was on one of the ships. He was a cousin of the King of Spain and was there as a representative of the crown. In addition, he controlled the purse strings for the expedition. The Irish put a bounty on the lives of the Spaniards who survived the sinking of the ships and killed them when caught. However, his relative escaped being killed by marrying an Irish lass.

His family grew up in New York. His brother traveled the world. As a result he came in contact with a distant cousin who told the same story.

Nancy Tingey shared a Civil War letter and her research on the author. This was not from any of her ancestors, but a relative, after buying a gun, found this letter tucked behind the lining of the gun case. After sending a copy of the letter to Nancy, she researched the Union soldier, but was unable to locate any descends to whom the letter could be returned.

Here is a transcript of the letter:

Camp Near Sharpsburg
October 8th 1862

Dear Father,

Having a few spare moments this evening and not having any regular mail, and hearing that Samuel P. Moses was over at the Reserves In search of William Addison's Body, I thought I would write a few lines and send it with him. Our mail has been laying at Washington for the last three weeks. Enclosed Or with Moses I will send Twenty Dollars. We received the balance of our Bounty yesterday But we have not got any wages yet nor do not know when we will. Some say in 2 weeks but I don't believe a word I hear in camp any more for there are so many reports.

There are a great many citizens traveling through here now visiting the battlefield. Hundreds of them are to be seen in groups together picking up whatever is to be seen to carry home for a relic of the Antietam battle. There was 50 here one day from Perry. There is not a day hardly but there are someone here from the upper end of the county. Last Tuesday there was several prominent citizens of Bloomfield here with the intentions of staying three days. But on the evening of the 2nd day there was a sudden move in camp. A Wisconsin division changed their position about 1 mile. Their camp had become filthy and they changed on account of health. When they saw the batteries coming over the hill at full speed, they thought it was time to leave and sure enough they did start off on a doublequick. That was once they started before they were ready.



President Abraham Lincoln meets with Gen. George McClellan at Sharpsburg after Antietam

We had a grand review on Friday last. The President was here to see us, accompanied by General McClellan & staff and a host of other field officers. The expression, Old Abe is very suitable. His

clothes were the very stamp of an old rail splitter. He had an old dress coat on that was worn threadbare. A pair of old style gaiters that were ripped along the side and an old stovepipe hat as it is sometimes called that looked like as if it was fit for throwing away a year ago. As he rode along the lines every boy he passes he took off his hat. He is the man for President. He knows his business and is none of your stuck up fops like some of the other officers of a very low grade. Tatoo has beat for all lights to be put out and I must close now.

Write as soon as you get this letter and the money.

Yours truly, George Pensyl

As part of her research, Nancy found an obituary for George Pensyl:

George Pensyl

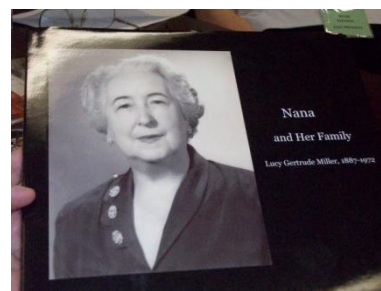
Bendersville Feb. 23—George Pensyl, a resident of this county until a few years ago died Sunday morning at the home of his son in Harrisburg.

Mr. Pensyl was born at Center Mills but spent all of his life after childhood in Bendersville until he went to Harrisburg several years ago to reside with his sons. He was a veteran of the Civil War and had fought in a large number of battles. During the War he was captured and spent over a year in Confederate prisons. He was widely known in this section.

He is survived by two sons, U.G. Pensyl and Albert Pensyl, both of Harrisburg; by three brothers, Henry, Hiram and Frank, living in Altoona, and by two sisters, Mrs. Baish and Mrs. Jacob Snyder, both living near Bendersville.

Funeral Wednesday morning after the arrival of the morning train from Harrisburg. Services in the Lutheran church followed by interment in Bendersville cemetery.

According to the Gettysburg Times, George Pensyl died in 1909 of a nervous break-down.



Anne Field

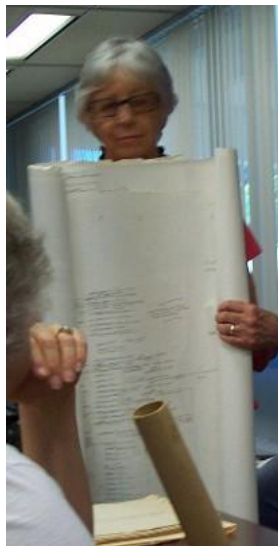
prepares family history photo books for her family. Her sisters and cousins are not interested in genealogy, so she makes the books

with them in mind. The one she shared with us was

of her grandmother, Lucy Miller, who was born in a log cabin 200 miles from Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1886. Lucy's parents came from England. Originally, the family was wealthy from the shipping business, but lost their money in the 1850s. The pioneer life did not appeal to Lucy's father, so the family moved to Pittsburgh, where her mother's brother was in the hotel business. While in Pittsburgh, Lucy's younger sister caught herself on fire playing with matches.

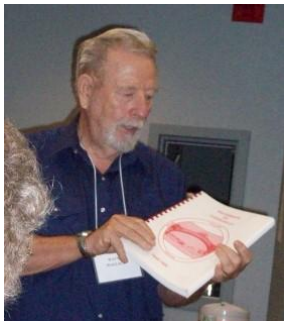
The family moved back to England about a year later where there was better care for burn victims. Lucy grew up in the London area, went to finishing school, developed a lovely accent before the family moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where her father became a bookkeeper for a cattle business. It was in Cheyenne that Lucy met her future husband who was out West installing heating and plumbing for the hotels in what would soon be Glacier National Park. Lucy and Jim Healy raised their family in the St. Paul, Minnesota, area, later moving to California.

Because Anne inherited many, many old photographs, photo books are a great way to share the family history without overwhelming her family with text. They love the books and learn something about their family history. This is the 7th book she has done. She uses a program from the website **Blurb.com** which you download to your computer, create the book and then upload to them to print.



*Sydna Wallace shares
Genealogy chart*

Sydna Wallace shared a large genealogy pedigree chart and a book written in 1910 by her mother.



John Barnhart shared that he has been in contact with a distant cousin who sent him a disc with 877 pages of family information. He also shared some books he has collected in his travels that aid in his research.

Rosalie Heppner brought a

picture frame. After she purchased it, she took off the back and discovered an old family photo belonging to the Spanos family who is prominent in Stockton. She mailed the picture to the family.



Margery Barnhart learned on Ancestry of someone trying to find anyone interested in an old Smith family Bible that had come into his possession. He contacted Margery to see if she was interested. She now has that Bible that belonged to her great-great grandparents. With the Bible came a family photo. The Bible records go back to 1622.

My apologies to anyone who shared that day and whose story was missed in this review.

July Meeting Attendance

Membership:

Attendance Final Count: 22 Members + no

Guests for a total of 25

Total Members: 83 active.

Speaker for September Meeting: Sheila Ruiz Harrell

Ms. Harrell topic will be "Some Early Settlers of the San Joaquin Valley. She will be speaking to us in September about the early history of Hispanic settlers in Merced and Fresno counties, specifically in the years between 1870 and 1900.

Here is what Sheila has to say about herself: "I am Sheila Ruiz Harrell, a practicing genealogist for fifty plus years and professional for the past twelve. As a 7th generation Californio I am also a direct descendant of 29 of those who arrived in California by 1781. Documenting my own family has given me a wide range of experience in genealogical and historical records research, in addition to following the descendants of those first settlers throughout California...and those who were already living here."

An Hour of Your Time

By Robyn Echols

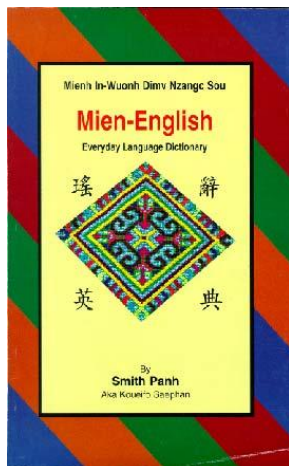
(Part 2. Part 1 may be found in the November, 2015 issue of *The Family Snoop*. The original article was printed in *Family Chronicle Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2010)

To preface, this article resulted from an opportunity I had several years ago to teach a family history class to a group of Hmong and Mien women most of whom did not speak English well yet.... I was warned by the leader who contacted me that some of the women were unable to read or write. They were illiterate not only in English, but also in their own language. My challenge was to come up with some ideas they could use. I gave four suggestions. Three were included in the first part of my article published last November. Here is the fourth suggestion and conclusion of the article.



4. May I have an hour of your time?

As I thought about how to encourage these women to preserve their histories, my first thought was to suggest they preserve an oral history. I thought about the slave narratives, a collection of oral histories shared by former slaves who were still alive during the time the Works Progress Administration was tasked to collect these histories. I suggested to the Hmong and Mien woman that they could use a tape



recorder to record their histories.



Hmong women at Coc Ly Market, Sapa Vietnam

However, I was aware of some downfalls of oral histories recorded on tape. First of all, if the old-style magnetic tape is used, it will probably degrade in time unless the history is transferred to a more current media or is transcribed. That is how I lost my grandmother's oral history. I did not transfer it or transcribe it in its entirety before the tape became demagnetized.

Mein boy traditional dress

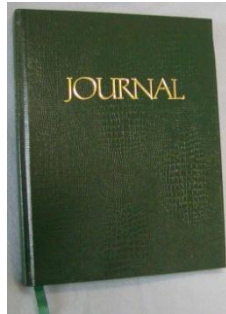
Technology changes. Recording equipment and media become obsolete and unavailable. Even if a history is recorded with a digital recorder and the disk survives the ravishes of time, there is no guarantee that there will be a player available decades away. Beta video players and 8-track tapes come to mind.

Another problem is the language barrier that will eventually arise. Just as with earlier immigrant groups, the children and perhaps the grandchildren will be able to speak the native tongue of their immigrant mother or grandmother. They may be able to write in the native language. However, each succeeding generation is more likely to learn only English. Even if the history is recorded in the native language of these Hmong and Mien women, it is very likely that their great-grandchildren will not be able to understand what is said, even if the recording media survives and can be played.

That is why I advised these women that recording their stories may be a wonderful start, but

they need to do more. They must take responsibility for seeing the history is preserved in a language that can be understood by their descendants, and on a media that is more likely to survive.

I suggested they each get a bound journal book. Except in the case of fire or natural disasters, books can last longer than many other forms of recording media. I suggested that they find family members who can not only understand their native language but who can also read and write English proficiently. Then they need to ask those family members to help record their histories.



Hmong wedding

I told them to ask these family members, “May I please have an hour of your time?” Set up a schedule so that one hour per week, perhaps on a Sunday afternoon, a family member will sit with them and write down their family history. Whether the English-speaking recorder is listening to the stories already on tape or directly from their older relative, ask them to give an hour each week to help preserve this history for the future. After all, ultimately the history is for them and the coming generations.

After they record as much genealogy information as they can remember about siblings, parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles and great-grandparents, I told the women they need to tell their own stories. The stories do not need to be in chronological order. They can record or have written

down their memories as they are remembered. It is better to have them recorded out of order than to worry so much about form that they do not get recorded at all.

After that, they can consider saving their histories in other forms. They may not be technological experts, but their grandchildren probably are. Those who have been raised in North America are probably proficient using a computer or a recording device. They will know how to record these stories in digital format, and then update them to the most current form of media as technology continues to develop.



Hmong in traditional dress

47th International Convention of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

“Before the Storm”

July 11-16, 2016

Hilton Concord Hotel

1970 Diamond Blvd. • Concord, California

American Historical Society of Germans from Russia

The evolution and life of Germanic colonies from 1763 to 1916

in the Volga, Black Sea and Ukraine areas of the Russian Empire

To reserve a room, call (925) 827-2000 or toll-free at 1-800-826-2644. Reserve a

room online at <http://www.hilton.com>. Use the code

AHG. The AHSGR group rate is \$119. Register for the convention online at www.ahsgr.org.

(For more details, see the June, 2016 issue of *The Family Snoop*.

Next MCGS Board Meeting is October 1, 2016 at 1:00p.m. in the Doris Cochran Room

The Family Snoop is published on the first day of each month except Aug and Dec. It is sent in .pdf to members who receive it by email. Back copies can be emailed to members as attachments. Send items, articles, stories, etc., to robynechols AT gmail DOT net. You can choose to receive the Family Snoop via email in a pdf format – get it sooner and in color. Contact Sharon Darby, our treasurer. **Deadline for the October 2016 issue is September 25th.** There is no meeting in August.

Dues are \$20 per year for an Individual or \$30 for a Family living at the same address.

The Doris Cochran Research Room is open 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays,
BUT WE NEED SUBSTITUTE VOLUNTEERS TO HELP KEEP IT OPEN!! Please Volunteer!

Merced County Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 3061
Merced, CA. 95344

President	Greg Entriiken
President-elect	--
Vice President	Lois Jimenez
Treasurer	Sharon Darby
Secretary	Stephanie McLeod
Past President	Shari Stetson
Membership	Margie Barnhart
Hospitality	Michle Burroughs
Publicity	Open
Programs	Susan Benes, Michle Burroughs, Rosalie Heppner, Stephanie McLeod & Shari Stetson
Editor, <i>The Family Snoop</i>	Robyn Echols robynechols AT gmail DOT com

Family History Center

www.familysearch.org
 1080 E Yosemite Ave Merced. 722-1307
 Tuesday, Wednesday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm,
 Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Tuesday evening, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Free access on their computers to Ancestry and other programs. Take along your flash drive to save and download. Volunteers are there to help you and microfilms can now be ordered online.

Merced County Library

www.co.merced.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=77
 2100 O Street Merced 209-285-7642
 Fax: 209-726-7912
 Monday through Thursday – 10am to 6:00pm
 Friday & Saturday - 10:00am to 5:00pm

Merced County Courthouse Museum

www.mercedmuseum.org
 21st and N Streets
 P. O. Box 3557
 Merced, CA 95344
 Wednesday through Sunday - 1:00pm to 4:00pm.
 Free admission.

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County

www.cagenweb.com/lr/stanilaus/gssc.html
 Click on their newsletter to read online or download.
 Information about bus trips and programs offered throughout the year that may interest you.

Monthly Financial Report: June 2016

Income	.22
Expenses	(131.00)
Checking Balance	\$5,230.96
Savings Account:	3,868.45
CD-9 months; matures on 12/26/16	5,858.98
CD-12 months; matures on 5/18/17	5,682.79
Total in Checking and Savings:	\$20,641.18

MCGS Website: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~camcgs>