

# THE FAMILY SNOOP

MERCED COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

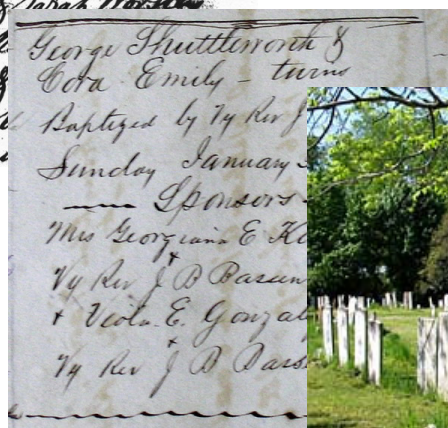
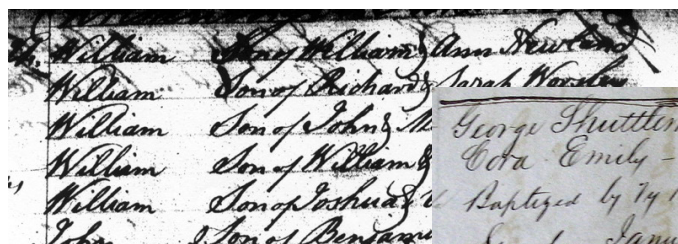
Vol. 30, No. 2

February 2012

## Annual Beginners Program

### Part 2

#### What to do next



- More how-to for beginners in genealogy
- Question and answer time to help you figure out where to look next
- Hands-on help with your research
- Long-time members and experienced genealogists – come to the meeting and share your wisdom, expertise and encouragement with those just beginning their family research

12:00 Noon     Saturday

25 February 2012

Gracey Room, Merced County Library

This meeting will be one week later than usual due to library holiday schedules

MCGS meets every 3d Saturday, 12:00 noon, Gracey Room, Merced County Library, 2100 O St., Merced

## Message from the President:



Stephanie McLeod  
*our new president*

Dear Friends – at the 2012 January meeting, a new President and a renewal of the previous governing body were installed, and as your new President, Stephanie McLeod, it is indeed an honor to be of service to you, the membership, and the institution of the Merced Genealogical Society. As I will try to do this to the best of my ability, the two meetings of June and September will be presided over by one of our Vice-Presidents, Lois Jimenez and Rosalie Heppner. This is due to my work schedule in the summer months. My husband, Neil McLeod, has a business called **Highland Leather** and we sell leather goods, including solid cowhide leather handmade belts of about nine different designs, some of which can be personalized, barrettes, key fobs, an array of fancy belts from a western company and a vast array of gold, silver, metal and pewter buckles. We work at five county fairs from June to mid-October.

I have been researching my family names since about the late 1980s to the early 1990s. My mother, Beverlie Jeane (née Braswell) Burdick was my inspiration since she did a lot of legwork and documentation on the Braswell name. The first ancestor to come to America was a Robert Bracewell, an Episcopalian clergyman from England in the early 1600s. He lived in the Virginian colonies. Later, family members moved to North Carolina and were peanut farmers. About three years ago I joined Ancestry.com and after learning the ins and outs, I found a Braswell who did all the rest of my work for me, going as far back as the Ulsters in Scotland, and he has written a book. Imagine my delight! That was a nugget I didn't expect to find. And that was last year.

On my father's side, George Norris Minnick was found coming from the *Palatinate* area of Germany in Bern, Germany. And I got much of this family history from a little book my dad gave me from my grandmother Edith, listing all the relatives she knew of. The name Minnick was originally *Muench* – meaning a monk. Probably pronounced mouink. So this original Muench came over in 1737 and lived in Pennsylvania. And again I found another person who has done a tremendous amount of research and he offered it for free on Ancestry.com. Amazing!

Other family names I'm researching are McLeod (out of Canada), McLaughlin (Chickasaw/Cherokee out of Arkansas) and Shannon.

And now I would like to encourage new members to communicate with any and all relatives to see how much they can contribute to your story because you never know when someone will pass away or have a stroke and you can't ask any questions.

Well, happy hunting! And if there is anyone who would like to share some of their experiences, humorous or otherwise, to help others, I'm sure our *Family Snoop* Editor would be thrilled to get a paragraph or two.

Looking forward to seeing you in February,  
Stephanie McLeod, President

### Beginners...

If you are just getting started and are looking for a genealogy software program, you might want to check out the following websites – or look for more by searching under genealogy software reviews. There are more software packages for the PC but there are several good ones for the MAC. When you find software that interests you, go to the company's home page. They have more information, often have a demo or even a free version. This helps you get a better idea of whether the program will suit you. Most have deluxe programs that you will have to buy, but if you like the program, they are worth it. Ask other genealogists what software they use and they will usually be happy to tell you.

#### Top Ten Reviews

<http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com/> [PC]  
<http://genealogy-software-review.toptenreviews.com/mac-genealogy-software/> [MAC]

#### GenSoftReviews

<http://www.gensoftreviews.com/>

#### No.1 Reviews.com

<http://genealogy-software.no1reviews.com/>

The **Olive Tree Genealogy Website** has online help for beginners:

#### 10 Steps to Starting Your Genealogy Journey & Finding Ancestors

The steps include information on finding your ancestors using death and burial records, census records, birth and baptismal records, using blogs, newsletters, the Family History Library website and more.

<http://www.olivetreegenealogy.com/beginner/>

## January Meeting Installation & Beginners Program

We had a great turnout for our January meeting with eighteen members and ten guests. Several of the members in attendance felt they could still be considered beginners. After a very brief meeting, the installation of officers was conducted by Shari Stetson, president, and the new slate of officers was sworn into office.



They are, from left, Shari Stetson, our Past President, Michle Burroughs, Hospitality, Sharon Darby, Treasurer, Stephanie McLeod, our new President for 2012, & Robyn Echols, Secretary. Other officers, not present: Lois Jimenez and Rosalie Heppner, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2d Vice Presidents.

Charleen Renteria, one of the members of the Program Committee, led the group through the Beginners Program, ably assisted by her daughter and computer tech, Roxanne.

Beginners learned about pedigree charts, family group sheets, and other useful forms. Charleen instructed us in the proper way to fill out the forms and to do it all in pencil until the information can be confirmed with proper sources. She discussed primary and secondary sources and why sourcing is important. Suggestions for where to go and find information – libraries and archives – were covered as well as useful websites with cautionary advice about genealogy trees online. Newcomers went away with handouts that included forms and a sheet of useful information for further research.



## Reminder!

It's time to pay your dues

Individuals are \$20.00; a family living at the same address is \$30.00 per calendar year. A monthly newsletter is sent to each address. You may choose to have it sent as an attachment in the PDF format by e-mail or by regular mail. Please note any corrections to name, address, email address or phone number and mail to MCGS, PO Box 3061, Merced, CA 95344. Membership dues are also accepted at the meeting.

## Help for Beginners

Classes for beginners will be held at the **Sacramento Public Library** during February:

Feb. 4: Beginning Genealogy - Using Records to Tell Your Ancestors' Stories with Karen Burney. 1 - 2:30 p.m. West Meeting Room.

Feb. 18: Introduction to Online Genealogy (Computer Class). 10:15 -11:45 a.m. 3rd floor Technology Lab.

Feb. 26: Beginning Genealogy with Janice Sellers. 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. West Meeting Room.

Registration required for all classes.

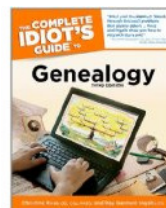
For more information call 264-2920 or see the website.

[www.saclibrary.org/](http://www.saclibrary.org/)

Click on the Events, type genealogy in the search box and scroll down the list. You will need to click on Show More Events at the end of the list to see all of February. Find the program you are interested in and click on Registration is required to attend.

### Coming out this March

#### The Complete Idiot's Guide to Genealogy



The brand new 3d edition of this book by Christine Rose, a well-known genealogy author and speaker. A great help for seasoned researchers as well as those just starting. The previous edition came out in 2006.

## Where to go next...

Now that you have gotten some basic information on your parents, grandparents and maybe great grandparents, how do you go about filling in the picture? Or how do you find out something you don't know? How do you go about proving some of the information you have gotten – proof is very important in genealogical research. Proving our facts – death, birth, marriage, etc. – means coming up with a document or some other source that helps you know for certain, or nearly certain, that your information is correct. If I say that my grandfather died on a certain date and you ask me how I know, what proof do I have, you would expect me to show you a death certificate, a gravestone inscription, an obituary, etc. If you have gotten your basic facts, you need to source them so you know where you got the information. Start doing this at the very first and you won't regret it later when you wonder where you got a piece of information. If you have gotten some of your information from family trees on Ancestry, you will have noticed that many or most of them do not provide a source for the information. So, if this is your "source" of information, you will need to verify the facts. Following is an example of how to go about doing this and where to look. I am going to start with some really basic facts about our ancestors, like, first of all, their names.

### Verifying the name of your ancestor

This sounds very basic – of course you know your ancestor's name! But maybe you don't. When I was first starting out and researching my mother's father's family, her paternal line, I really didn't know very much. She was born with the surname Whitted – we used to joke that she was half-witted. But her father, an early pilot, died in a plane crash when she was not quite three years old. She didn't really remember her father, just stories about him. And she knew her grandparents, but not that well. They sent her birthday gifts and cards and a wedding gift when she married. Her mother remarried when she was seven and when I was growing up I knew nothing about these grandparents. So I asked her the name of her grandfather – everyone just called him T.A. Whitted. When I asked her what T.A. stood for, she didn't bat an eye. "Theodore Albert" she said quickly. Sounded good to me. But when I tried to find him in a census – one of the few easily accessible sources back in the 1970s – I could not

find a Theodore Albert in any index. The index at that time only gave the head of household. So I wrote for a death certificate for his son, my grandfather. Death certificates usually have the name of the parents of the deceased. Personal information on a death certificate is filled out by an "informant" who is usually a member of the family – but not always. My grandfather had died before his parents so the chances were good that the name of the parents would be known. The informant on the death certificate was the brother of his wife, my grandmother. And the name of his father, on the death certificate, was Thomas Austin Whitted, not Theodore Albert. With this piece of information I was able to really start researching and his name was confirmed in various other sources over the years – census records, his death certificate, his marriage certificate, and his gravestone.

Verifying a person's name is just as important as checking out his or her birth or death. We sometimes know a person by a nickname or by the name they go by, maybe a middle name. And we may not know a woman's maiden name – she was just Grandma so and so. And maybe, like my mother, she had two maiden names. My mother changed her last name legally when she was a teenager to be the surname of her stepfather. You can't always find a birth certificate but there are other sources you can use. Death certificates, marriage records, wills and gravestones are good sources to check for the correct name of your ancestor. Census records often give the name a person was called – Lucy, instead of Lucille – or they give a middle initial, not the full name.

Where do you find death certificates? Marriage certificates? Gravestones? Stay tuned.

Anne Field

**MCGS meetings** are now held at noon, not 1:00, on the 3d Saturday of the month. The library now closes at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday so our meeting time was changed. There is no meeting in August.

**MCGS** has a website at

**[www.rootsweb.com/~camcgs](http://www.rootsweb.com/~camcgs)**

The website is maintained by Alma Stone.

Alma also runs a Merced County Genealogy website at **[www.mercedgenealogy.com](http://www.mercedgenealogy.com)**

## Mark your calendars!

**Who Do You Think You Are** – the NBC series on genealogy – starts a third season on Friday, February 3d.

Celebrities covered this year include: Martin Sheen, Marisa Tomei, Blair Underwood, Reba McEntire, Rob Lowe, Helen Hunt, Rita Wilson, Edie Falco, Rashida Jones, former NFL running back Jerome Bettis, Jason Sudeikis and Paula Deen. If you have never watched this series, you're in for a treat.

**"Finding Your Roots,"** a 10-part series, debuts on PBS stations on March 25 at 8:00 p.m. The PBS series hosted by Henry Louis Gates Jr. is back this season. Each episode will feature two people. Featured this season are Kevin Bacon, Robert Downey, Jr., Branford Marsalis, John Legend, Martha Stewart, Barbara Walters and Rick Warren, among others.

The California Genealogical society and the Oakland Family History Center are teaming up to offer the **Ancestral Homeland Series**. Each month a different country will be featured. The January class was an Introduction to Swedish Research using online resources and materials. February will highlight England. Check the website for future classes and countries. The first hour of the class will be a demonstration using various resources and the second hour will be a workshop. Cost for each class is \$10.00. Oakland California Family History Center; free parking. Class is limited to the first thirty who register:

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07e5go664if705406f&llr=4fa9r6bab>

The **1940 U.S. Census** will be released on April 2d this year. It will take several months before the index to this census will be completed, you can, in the meantime, browse the images. If you know the Enumeration District where your ancestors lived, you will be able to find them more easily. Use the Steve Morse website with enumeration district calculator tool. Yikes! What ancestors? You might even find yourself!

<http://stevemorse.org/census/unified>

Also check out the FamilySearch announcement about their partnership with findmypast.com and Archives.com to get it indexed quickly. <http://http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700209418/Family-history-organizations-announce-effort-to-publish-1940-census-index.html> (<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700209418/Family-history-organizations-announce-effort-to-publish-1940-census-index.html>)

**More upcoming classes** at the Sacramento Central Library:

Saturday, 18 February 2012

### **Introduction to Online Genealogy**

Learn about the websites that will get you started on your family history research.

Saturday, 21 April 2012

### **Social Networking for Genealogists**

Connecting with other genealogists online is a great way to further your research. We'll show you the sites.

Saturday, 19 May 2012

### **Introduction to Ancestry Library Edition**

You can use the Ancestry Library Edition databases at any Sacramento library branch. Come learn more about them!

For more information or to register, call 916-264-2920, or visit [www.saclibrary.org](http://www.saclibrary.org).

Classes are from 10:15 - 11:45 am in the Technology Lab, 3rd Floor, 828 I Street, Sacramento

### **Tour the California State Archives**

Free, behind-the-scenes hour-long tours will begin at noon on February 24 and March 23, 2012.

The State Archives' collections of historic records include more than 100 million documents, 20,000 maps and architectural drawings, 250,000 photographs and thousands of video and audio recordings.

For more information, contact the Archives Tour Coordinator or call (916) 653-2385.

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/tour.htm>



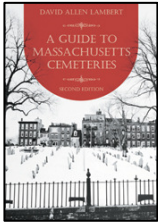


We are doing more of our contact with members by email. If you see your name on this list, we either have your incorrect email address or none at all.

Please send an email to [mcgensoc-membership@yahoo.com](mailto:mcgensoc-membership@yahoo.com) so that we can keep you informed.

Marjorie Block, Mary Ellen Brown, Richard Carter, Joe Ann Coe, Clarence & Lorraine Follett, Lettie Holdeman, Lois Jackson, Vick Loftin, Joyce Lane Orrock, Frances Manning Parker, Madge Seidel, Terri Lee Wilson Smiley, Gail Wills

## Research Notes

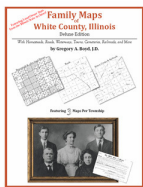


Do you have ancestors in Massachusetts? This guidebook, revised in March 2009, gives the year the cemetery was consecrated or the oldest stone or burial. A full index of cemeteries is given.

**A Guide to Massachusetts Cemeteries**, 2d Edition

David Allen Lambert

The book is available at <http://www.americanancestors.org/Product.aspx?id=14801>



A great series of maps is available from Arphax Publishing. Books of maps, by county, show original landowners as well as waterways, railroads, cemeteries, cities and towns. Books are available in paperback, spiral binding or hardbound. Look for maps for your county of research at <http://www.arphax.com/ac/Default.aspx>

## Record Databases in the Illinois State Archives

If you have Illinois ancestors you might want to check out the Illinois State Archives web page that lists its many databases. There are eleven databases just for Illinois veterans. Besides a marriage index and two death indexes, there are many other databases listed that are located at various universities in Illinois. These include McLean County Probate Record Index, 1834-1934; Woodford County Almshouse Registers Index, 1868-1957; Carroll County Birth Certificates Index, 1877-1913; Sangamon County Guardian's Case Files Index, 1825-1901; and many more.

<http://www.sos.state.il.us/departments/archives/databases.html>

Check out the California Birth index, 1905-1995, and the California Death index, 1940-1997, at <http://cabi.mirrorz.com> and <http://cadi.mirrorz.com>

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The Doris Cochran Research Room is open 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.  
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The Los Banos Genealogy Society has a library collection of more than 1400 books and CDs as well as an obituary collection starting with 1992. The Library is open by appointment only. Call Betty Bettencourt for an appointment: 209-826-4882.  
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**The Family Snoop** is published on the first day of each month. 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 mcgsmail@annefield.net

**Deadline for the March 2012 issue is February 18, 2012.**

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

Family History Center [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

1080 E Yosemite Ave Merced. 722-1307

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10:00am to 4:00pm

Tuesday and Wednesday 7:00pm to 9:00pm

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 be ordered.

Merced County Library [www.co.merced.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=77](http://www.co.merced.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=77)

2100 O Street Merced 209-285-7642 Fax: 209-726-7912

Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 9:30am to 5:00pm

Tuesday and Thursday - 10:30am to 6:00pm.

Saturday - 9:30am to 3:00pm.

Merced County Courthouse Museum [www.mercedmuseum.org](http://www.mercedmuseum.org)

21st & N Streets Merced

Wednesday through Sunday - 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Admission is free.

Genealogical Society of Stanislaus County [www.cagenweb.com/lr/stanislaus/gssc.html](http://www.cagenweb.com/lr/stanislaus/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.

President	Stephanie McLeod 383-1009
1st Vice President	Lois Jimenez 723-9019
2nd Vice President	Rosalie Heppner 358-5298
Treasurer	Sharon Darby 723-5374
Secretary	Robyn Echols 358-2461
Past President	Shari Stetson 358-7719
Membership	Open
Hospitality	Michle Burroughs 383-4112
Publicity	Open
Programs	Michle Burroughs, Rosalie Heppner, Charleen Renteria & Shari Stetson
Editor, <i>The Family Snoop</i>	Anne Field 357-8672 mcgsmail@annefield.net

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

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Monthly Financial Report: December 2011

Income:	.12
Expenses:	00.00
Checking Total	<u>\$2,751.45</u>
Savings Account	3,859.86
CD-9 months; matures on 07/20/12	5,811.35
CD-12 months; matures on 5/19/12	<u>5,620.16</u>
<b><u>Total in Checking and Savings:</u></b>	<b><u>\$18,042.82</u></b>