

THE FAMILY SNOOP

MERCED COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 34, No. 10

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

November 2016 Meeting



**What Fun
Genealogy
Discovery
Have You
Made
Recently?**

**Share something
fun, new, books,
websites or maybe
you finally found
your great, great
grandmother**

1:00 p.m. Saturday

November 19, 2016

Gracey Room, Merced County Library

Speaker for the October Meeting: Robert Givens

The speaker in October was Robert Givens who shared information on New England research. He has held many responsible positions throughout his life in the realm of family history, including serving for several years as a service missionary for FamilySearch.

Currently, Bob Givens is the DNA coordinator for the Fresno County Genealogical Society. He may be reached at regivens1120@gmail.com.

Mr. Givens goals for this class were to increase our understand the history and geography of this area, grasp the Research Challenges of this area and find out how to best research in each modern state.

He shared the following historical Perspective:

- New England wasn't settled all at one time.
- The initial focus at Plymouth soon moved to the more favorable Boston.
- In time groups moved out from there to settle in what became New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut. (New England Hiving Process)
- Mid to Late 1600's you would find in New England that the bulk of the settled area was dominated by Massachusetts. But pockets of other settlements were beginning with significant populations of their own as in Rhode Island and Connecticut.
- New England in 1700 - Organized: MA – included Maine; RI – as we know it today; NH – also claimed VT; CT – as we know today; Disputed areas: ME – part of MA and VT – jointly claimed by NY and NH.
- In 1790 when our nation was formed what states did we have: Massachusetts – Including Maine; Rhode Island; New Hampshire; Connecticut; and , Missing was Vermont – a part of New York.
- What can we learn from all of this?

- 1) In the early days of settlement Massachusetts and New York dominated the present New England area.
- 2) You can't go by present day boundaries when you search for early ancestors as states/colonies were formed a various times. Prior to their formation you will have to go to the parent state/colony for some records.

The following were his general Tips for Researching New England:

- Remember the earliest settlers were non-conformists and chose not to transfer the full English laws and customs.
- Early records were not kept in nice neat order – things might be jumbled and in no particular order.
- The transfer of real property could be a problem – this was a concept that was new to the early colonists.

He suggested the following starting Point Resources:

- **LDS State Research Guides** – go to FamilySearch.org and then to “Research Help” to “Articles.” These documents can all be downloaded/printed for free.
- **The Source** – “Colonial English Research” by Robert Charles Anderson pp. 679-
- **The Handybook of Genealogists** – articles on each state

This only scratches the surface of the information he shared. He also shared sources and specifics for each New England state. More information may be found from the New England Historical Genealogy Society website which may be found at:

<http://www.americanancestors.org/>

October Meeting Attendance

Membership:

Attendance Final Count: 28 Members + 5 Guests for a total of 33.

Total Members: 86 active.

Five Ancestry.com Do's and a Don't

By Diane Haddad

(Reprinted from the *Family Tree Magazine* blog August 8, 2016; <http://blog.familytreemagazine.com/insider/>)

...If you want to take advantage of the full complement of Ancestry.com's databases (which number more than 30,000 and range in size from 2 million-plus names all the way down to one name), there are some essential steps you should add to your to-do list:

- **Do search specific collections.** It's easy to head straight for the global search on the home page, but the other, smaller collections listed in the Card Catalog may turn up hidden gems.
- **Do create a game plan for your search.** It's tempting—and it can be useful—to just type in a name and hit Search, but you end up with a lot of results to wade through. Once you get past the relevant results on the first couple of pages, try a different approach: Set a specific goal for the type of information you want to find and the kind of record that would contain this information. Adjusting your search terms accordingly (and using filters when you view your matches) will bring more-accurate results.
- **Do familiarize yourself with everything Ancestry.com has to offer**—from trees and shaky leaf hints (yes, these can be very helpful when used with care)—to historical records, message boards (which are free for anyone to use), and AncestryDNA.
- **Do try Ancestry.com for free** during a free-access weekend (usually around holidays such as the Fourth of July or Veterans Day), at a FamilySearch Center, or at a library that offers Ancestry Library Edition. This way, you can get comfortable with the site before you subscribe (or decide not to).
- **Do revisit your searches every so often**, as databases are frequently added and updated. New results may show up.

And we'll add one don't:

- **Don't get frustrated.** Or at least, don't let frustration turn you off genealogy. The more you experiment with the site, the more genealogy results you'll discover. Ask genealogists you know for help, look for guides such as our [*Unofficial Guide to Ancestry.com*](#)....

This is a monthly promotional blog for the magazine, but often has valuable information. It is a good one to subscribe to for inspiration and helpful tips

10 FREE SITES FOR LOCATING U.S. MILITARY WHO DIED IN SERVICE

From 1775 through 1991, over 41 million men and women who served in the U.S. military during wartime lost their lives. The following free websites and databases contain information about U.S. military personnel who died in service or are buried in a national veterans cemetery or in a private cemetery with a government grave marker.

1. Nationwide Gravesite Locator Database

<<http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>>

Search for burial locations of U.S. veterans and their family members in VA National Cemeteries, state veterans cemeteries, various other military and Department of Interior cemeteries, and for veterans buried in private cemeteries (from 1997) when the grave is marked with a government grave marker.

2. American Battle Monuments Commission

<<https://www.abmc.gov/>>

Search or browse for information on 218,000 individuals buried or memorialized overseas at sites maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Information includes the cemetery and specific burial location, branch of service, war or conflict in which they served, date of death, service number, and awards.

3. Arlington National Cemetery - Find a Grave

<<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Finda-Grave>>

Arlington National Cemetery's app, ANC Explorer makes it easy to locate gravesites, events or other points of interest throughout Arlington National Cemetery. Search by name, section, and/or date of birth or death to find information on individuals buried in Arlington, including front-and-back of headstone.

4. National Society Sons of the American Revolution Patriot and Grave Index

<<http://patriot.sar.org/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=Grave%20Registry&-loadframes>>

The National Society Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR) oversees this ongoing project to identify graves of those who served in the U.S. Revolutionary War. The data has been compiled from the NSSAR Revolutionary War Graves Registry, the NSSAR Patriot Index and from various State Grave Registry databases and is NOT a comprehensive list of all the individuals who served in the American Revolutionary War.

5. Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System

<<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailorsdatabase.htm>>

Search this online database administered by the National Park Service for information on 6.3 million soldiers, sailors, and US Colored Troops who served in the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. In addition to basic information on each soldier, including full name, side, unit, and company, the site also includes prisoner of war records, burial records, Medal of Honor recipients, and other historical information.

6. Soldiers of the Great War (World War One)

<<https://books.google.com/books?id=dswMAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA5#v=onepage&q&f=false>>

This three-volume publication compiled by William Mitchell Haulsee, Frank George Howe, and Alfred Cyril Doyle, documents American soldiers who lost their lives in Europe during World War One, compiled from official casualty lists. When available from family members, photographs of the military men and women are included as well. Available for free browsing on Google Books.

7. World War II Honor List of Dead and Missing Army and Army Air Forces Personnel

<<http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/army-casualties/>>

Arranged by state, these lists from the U.S. National Archives document War Department casualties (Army and Army Air Force personnel) from World War II. Entries in the list are arranged first by name of county and then alphabetically by name of deceased. Information provided includes serial number, rank and type of casualty.

8. World War II War Casualties of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Personnel

<<http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/navy-casualties/index.html>>

This free database from the National Archives identifies those men on active duty with the United States Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, whose deaths resulted directly from enemy action or from operational activities against the enemy in war zones from December 7, 1941, to the end of World War II. The list includes the rank of the decedent, and the name, address and relationship of nextof-kin.



*Korean War Memorial at Washington, D.C.
Courtesy R. Hood Photography*

9. Korean War Casualty Databases

<http://www.koreanwar.org/html/korean_war_databases.html>

The Korean War Project Uniform Casualty File allows you to search all available government and private databases of casualties from the Korean War.

10. State-Level Fatal Casualty Lists for the Vietnam War

<<http://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-lists/state-level-alpha.html>>

Browse by state to find lists of U.S. military casualties of the Vietnam War from the National Archives. Information includes name, branch of service, rank, birth date, home city and county, incident or death date, and whether their remains were recovered.

(From an article by Kimberly Powell in About.com Genealogy 10 Nov 2015; Reprinted from Monterey County Genealogical Society Inc. Newsletter for July/August 2016, formatting added)



Upcoming Programs for 2016-17	
November 19	What Fun Genealogy Discovery Have You Made Recently?
December 17	Annual Christmas Celebration - Members
January 21, 2017	Annual Beginners Class
February 25	Annual Beginners Class



CARVED IN STONE: ISOLATED TRADITIONS

Part Two: By Shayna Matthews

(Part One of Carved in Stone: Isolated Tradition was printed in the October, 2016 edition of The Family Snoop.)



Contrasting the Tennessee Valley Combs, a walk through my own native land and its cemeteries will show you a much different form of heritage carved in stone. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania is home to a plethora of rich Penna-Dutch folklore and traditions. My favorite? The hex sign. Pennsylvania Dutch consists of a group of people who are descendants from German immigrants. They arrived sometime before the 1800's and settled in the pristine farmlands of southeastern Pennsylvania. Confusing as it sounds, this group is not Dutch, but German. "Deutsch" is the German word for, well, "German". This is also where our English word "Dutch" derived. The Pennsylvania Deutsch carried with them a flair for artistic folklore. Their belief in Hex Signs--those colorful and intricately painted designs, began showing up on the barns they built. Now, if you know German, you know that "hex" means "witch". It is often said that the original belief in the hex

signs is that they are painted at the top of a barn--the farmer's livelihood--to ward off evil spirits and witches. Others say the signs are merely for decoration.



Pennsylvania Deutsch Barn decorated with Hex Signs.



Tulips and hearts are popular designs known example of the grisly instrument in Pennsylvania German gravestone art. It is inscribed in German tongue, translated to read:

"So rest my friend in your grave until that day when Jesus shall unite the body with the soul and bring together the "brotherhood" with our chorus of children in that great year of Jubilee.

Reader

Put your house in order for you too must die."

This morbid gravestone sits, dark and foreboding, among the pleasantly carved arches with intricate flowers, moons and stars, birds and hearts so colored throughout the culture. Most stone markers, perhaps unimpressive in shape compared to the Combs, were (and still are) engraved with the telltale art of the hex sign. In contrast to Memento Mori, weeping flowers, distlefinks (birds modeled after a goldfinch which bring good luck in the culture), and a number of various designs can be found carved in stone; forever granting wishes of love, prayer and good luck to the beloved resting below.

The next time you are passing by a secluded cemetery, perhaps you will take the time to stop and look around. What remnants of isolated traditions will you find carved in stone within your own region?

This article was originally published as a post on the Western Fictioneers blog in June 14, 2016, and is reprinted with the author's permission.



<http://westernfictioneers.blogspot.com/2016/06/carved-in-stone-isolated-traditions-by.html>

Whatever the reason for the origin, hex signs have enriched the culture. They are on our barns and in our pottery, in our paintings and even printed on the plastic wrappers on our loaves of bread. But, like my husbands' ancestors and their isolated cultures scattered throughout the fields and cedar groves, my isolated heritage can be found amongst the graves, as well. A walk through the pre-Civil War section of the German side of my family showed me a few final resting places nearly as unique as the Combs. One stone in particular caught my attention; "decorated" with an hourglass, a skull and a sickle, it reminds me of something you might stumble across late at night in a Stephen King novel. The stone is called *Memento Mori*, and is quite rare for a Pennsylvania German tombstone for the reason that "Death's attributes" were not popular with the culture. The Memento Mori design died out (pun intended) completely between 1740-1800 in the region, and only three stone cutters used this motif on their stones. Use of the sickle is the only



The Memento Mori Grave in Lancaster, PA. Skull, hourglass & sickle rarity.



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 January 2017 issue is December 27th.** 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

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President-elect	--
Vice President	Lois Jimenez
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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: September 2016

Income	30.33
Expenses	(167.00)
Checking Balance	<u>\$4577.81</u>
Savings Account:	3,868.93
CD-9 months; matures on 12/26/16	5,864.15
CD-12 months; matures on 5/18/17	<u>5,668.52</u>
Total in Checking and Savings:	<u>\$19,999.41</u>

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