

# FAMILY FINDER "Quick Notes"

Dedicated to Helping English-Speaking Family  
Historians in Europe Help Each Other



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Volume 22, Number 01 ISSN 1040-4821

January 2008

## Events



The German Alps  
January 2008

Please reserve the  
following  
dates on your calendar.

All meetings are held at  
6 PM at the Makedonia  
Restaurant, Heidelberg,  
unless otherwise noted.

### 24 January Program & Presenter

Members are urged to attend this meeting so  
that a quorum is present to hold the GASERE  
Annual Meeting.

### 28 February Program and Presenter To Be Announced

### 27 March Program and Presenter To Be Announced

***Interested in writing for our  
newsletter, or have an interesting  
tidbit about your research to share?***

**Contact Sandy Perry at:  
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## ***Is There a Pirate in YOUR Family?***

*Why is it that some researchers want to  
prove their descent from criminals, particularly  
the colorful ones like pirates?*

It seems that everyone is seeking a "special  
character" to place in their family tree. If you are one  
of those, maybe you can link one of the two most  
famous female pirates to your tree! Anne Bonny was  
one of the most famous female pirates on record.  
Born in County Cork, Ireland, to an attorney and his  
maidservant, Anne was raised in the Carolinas after  
her father moved his family in disgrace following her  
birth. She married a sailor named James Bonny.  
Bonny thought he would come to own the family  
plantation, which had made her father very wealthy,  
but Anne's father disowned her. Bonny and Anne  
then moved to the Bahamas where Bonny became  
an informer to Governor Woodes Rogers, accusing  
any sailor he didn't like as being a pirate. When  
Governor Rogers issued amnesty to all pirates,  
Bonny found himself without a job.

Anne grew to despise her husband Bonny,  
seeing him as shiftless and weak, and was soon  
attracted to Calico Jack Rackham. Calico was said  
to be a "handsome man who knew how to spend  
money as well as steal it". The attraction between  
the two grew and Anne soon joined the crew of  
privateer Rackham. Well-endowed and with a fiery  
spirit Anne also "had a temper that matched that of  
any man" and was considered to be as fearless as  
any other pirate. Calico offered to buy Anne from her  
husband, which was commonplace at the time.  
Instead of agreeing Bonny turned Calico Jack into

Governor Rogers. Calico and Anne stole a sloop, escaped capture, and resumed a life of piracy together. Always dressed in men's clothing, Anne was an expert with pistol and cutlass.

*She was deemed as dangerous as any male pirate, fearless in battle and often joined a boarding party.*

Mary Read was born in London. She was raised as a boy by her widowed mother. At age thirteen she was employed as a foot boy to a rich French woman, but ran away to join a man-o-war. Several years later she jumped ship, and enlisted in a foot regiment. In Flanders she fought with great bravery, and later joined a horse regiment. Throughout she kept her true identity secret. She confessed only after falling in love with a soldier whom she subsequently married. Mary and her husband opened an Inn called the *Three Horseshoes* near Castle Breda in Ireland. Upon the death of her husband, Mary returned to wearing men's clothing and tried to become a soldier again. Failing that, she took a ship back to the West Indies. In route, her ship was boarded by Calico where Mary found a woman was part of the crew. Anne Bonny was attracted to what she believed was a strapping young sailor. When Anne told "him" of her feelings, Mary then confessed that she, too, was a woman! Mary soon joined Calico's crew rather than lead the "dull life a woman." As fate would have it Mary fell in love with a captured sailor who had recently joined Calico's crew. Their honeymoon was short lived as in October of 1720 Mary, Anne and Calico Jack were captured.

Confessing to being women, Anne and Mary pleaded that as they were pregnant at the time, and should be tried separately after giving birth. Both men were tried at St. Jago de la Vega in Jamaica on 28th November 1720 and were sentenced to be hanged. Mary was as spirited as Anne. When asked during trial why a woman might turn to piracy, she did not give an answer that may have garnered her a pardon, rather she replied, "*That as to hanging, it is no great hardship, for were it not for that, every cowardly fellow would turn pirate and so unfit the Seas, that men of courage must starve.*" Mary Read escaped the hangman's noose by dying from fever while in jail.

Anne Bonny received several stays of execution. However, nothing more on her fate can be found in official records. Some surmise her father may have forgiven her, bought her at ransom and returned her to his home in the Carolinas. But, nothing can be documented. This is what makes placing pirates and other such colorful criminals in your family tree so hard! If you have a documented "pirate" in your family, let us know. We would be happy to print your story!

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**PO**