



DECEMBER ANNUAL POTLUCK MEETING

TIME: Sunday, December 14, 2008

1:00 pm

Library Open, 12:00 to 5:00 pm

Please bring an entre', salad, or dessert (or olives, pickles, etc.). All utensils, plates, cups, napkins, and drinks will be provided.

Ethnic dishes are always very welcome!

2:00 pm -- Program

Program: What happened during YOUR year? Not necessarily genealogical --- PLEASE share !!!

PLACE: Immigrant Genealogical Society Library

1310 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, CA

THE YEAR 2008

As we near the end of 2008, we can each look backwards and see many changes that have taken place during this year in the ways we look for records, locate and use them, and how we integrate them into our genealogical records. This past year, for most of us, has seen more such changes than any year since we first began doing genealogy.

These same changes have also influenced the ways most genealogical societies operate, and how they need to serve their members. In most cases, it has meant more responsibility falling on the shoulders of fewer volunteers than in previous years.

Please be sure that you express your gratitude to the active leaders of all genealogical societies to which you belong, the persons who operate all those new society websites, and the many volunteers doing indexing and posting of records not available before. If possible, volunteer some of your time for making more local records available online too.

As you research, be sure to pass along tips to your editor regarding new records being posted, and new groups opening websites with valuable records not before available, so that other genealogists may participate in that bounty of new information you discover appearing regularly.

Another thing obvious this year is the increasing activity of state genealogical societies, state and city archives and libraries, as well as area archives to establish websites for the many old records their volunteers are digitizing and placing online. How wonderful this is in view of the increasing fragility of many old local records and out-of-print books that are unuseable without the wonders of digitization and computer search. Many very old records would never be useable again without trans-

fering their information to digital format. Do all you can to help.

GOOGLE TOOLBAR

A new tool that may be helpful for online searching is called "Google Toolbar." I have not had time to use this yet, but others point out its usefulness, particularly in doing random searches.

Of course, it is on the Google website, where you can view a four-minute video describing it, found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qefdagik38>. One handy trick is that it can highlight a word or name within text, so that it is much easier to recognize than having to read line by line. It was described in Dick Eastman's "Online Genealogy Newsletter", 18 Feb 2008, and in the March '08 issue of the "Conejo Valley Genealogical Society Newsletter".

This article should help considerably in searching old records that have been scanned and posted but are not yet indexed, or unindexed out-of-print books for a local area you are researching.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

New Year's Day (Neujahrstag in German) originated in German speaking areas of Europe. It was

KALENDER

Nov. 18	Dec. Newsletter Mailed
Nov. 19	IGS Board of Directors Meeting
Nov. 26, 29, 30	IGS Library Closed
Dec. 14	IGS Dec. Meeting/Potluck
Dec. 16	Jan. Newsletter Mailed
Dec. 24, 27, 28, 31	IGS Library Closed

originally called "Silvester" in honor of St. Silvester, the Pope who lived 314--335 A.D. who cured the Roman Emperor, Konstantin of leprosy. In gratitude, Konstantin became a Christian and made Christianity the official religion of his empire. Silvester is New Year's Eve to us, and New Year's Day is "Neujahrstag" in German. It was originally the "name-day" for Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The "Year" was first considered to be a starting point for the "church year" whereby the texts and topics of sermons were assigned specific Sundays to insure the teaching of the Bible's contents to most persons, who could not read or write. Customs varied in many countries until the population of the continent became more settled and permanent, with designated ruling families as well as church officials. Even to this day, many local communities have special history-based holidays or weekends for honoring special local historic events.

For a detailed explanation of this topic, find a copy of the Oct.-Dec. issue of *Der Blumenbaum*, 1998, pp. 9-12.

FOOTNOTE.COM

The Footnote Website started back in 1997 as "iArchives, Inc." It has quickly become one of the best known websites for Genealogists. There are some parts of the databases that are available to search without a fee, and others for which a fee is charged. You may also sign up for various time periods. It would be well worth checking out the Free sections of the website first at <www.footnote.com>.

The Footnote collection began with records from the National Archives. Partners in the project are now the Allen County Public Library (Ft. Wayne, IN), the LDS Church Center for Research Library, and many additional other record-keepers. You may search some of these records without paying a fee. There is also a way to leave comments about your findings.

The collection already contains about 43,000,000 records with about 2,000,000 new records added each month. These are records that have been digitized and posted on the Internet. The free records include such things as the Pennsylvania Archives, FBI case files, the Vietnam Wall names, the Project Bluebook (UFO records!), Brady Civil War photos, and more. Visit the website and browse a bit. In about 5 years many more record sets will be available without a fee---if you can wait !!!

A premium membership is now \$59 per year, or there is a monthly fee. Check also whether a larger society to which you belong, or your local genealogical or public library has a membership, so that you may enter via their website, free to you.

THE GREEN SAHARA

An interesting article in the Sept. 2008 issue of *National Geographic* deals with the cycles of desertification in the Sahara Desert, revealed by a space shuttle mission using "a synthetic aperture radar" to show long buried river channels etched into bedrock, and signs of intermittent wet intervals.

Land expeditions revealed remnants of human life, a fishing-based Kiffian culture 8-10,000 years ago, as well as a Tenarian culture of stone and hunting tools from about 6,500-4,500 years ago. There were skeletons of water animals, of humans, and small and large land animals, all showing sizeable populations. At one time, the Sahara was lush tropics. This article is worth reading.

AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM IN GERMANY

An Open-Air Museum may not help you identify individual emigrant lines of ancestors, but it can help you enormously to visualize what life was like for earlier generations. Such a museum is the Rhenisch Open Air Museum in Kommern, now Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany.

It all started with William Penn, who visited Krefeld near the border with the Netherlands in the 1670's. Protestants in that area were being persecuted by the long-established Catholics. He invited the persecuted residents to come to America, which some of them did. They settled in Germantown, now part of Philadelphia. Johannes Herbergs was not an original settler, but he emigrated in 1764 and claimed land that his grandfather had bought there in 1682. His diary of this project was used to design the Museum at Kommern.

You can read about the planning of the outdoor Museum and how trips to it can be arranged in the Sept./ Oct. issue of *Everton's Genealogical Helper*, pp. 40-42. A few pictures will whet your appetite, and help you understand the simpler way of life in early days.

Incidentally, *Everton's Genealogical Helper* is now available online in a digital format if you prefer that version. You may subscribe at <www.everton.com>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 7-13-- The Annual Salt Lake Christmas Tour to the Family History Library with Leland Meitzler and Donna Phillips <www.SaltLakeChristmasTour.com>, or call 801-949-7259.

Feb. 28, 2009--Whittier Area Genealogical Society (WAGS), a day-long Seminar featuring Curt B. Witcher, manager of the Historical Genealogy Department of Allen County Public Library, in Ft. Wayne, IN.

June 26-28, 2009--SCGS Jamboree, Burbank, CA

COLUMBUS KNEW MORE THAN WE'RE TOLD

Recently a couple of early history books have been written telling about how America came to be discovered. They are interestingly titled, "1421" by Gavin Menzies and "1434", apparently by the same author.

These books reveal some fascinating facts. In "1421," it is revealed that a Chinese fleet reached Italy between 1403-1425, leaving records of Chinese technologies and a copy of a map of the Americas in an archive there! It was a copy of that map that guided Columbus and Magellan in their explorations of the "New World". Incidentally, neither Columbus nor Magellan travelled alone. Each was accompanied by at least one other ship and crew.

There is reference to a website about the 1421 book at <www.1421.tv> Another url, <zhengheA1421.tv> is also mentioned in the article.

There are references to Chinese diagrams of canal locks, pumps, fountains, and many machines reproduced by Leonardo, apparently from his training by di Giorgio! The author describes Leonardo more as an illustrator than the inventor of numerous devices.

Another interesting note mentions that the new Chinese Emperor spent 3 years planning for the trip to Italy. The Chinese "calculated longitude without clocks and latitude without sextants!" Their ships made their way from the Malabar coast of India, across the Indian Ocean to "the canal linking the Nile to the Red Sea,

then down the Nile into the Mediterranean." Have you ever heard such comments before?

Our U.S. history books appear to be very lacking in diligent research before being written!

This whole topic and these urls look very interesting for anyone who loves history.

(*Ancient American*, Vol. 13, Number 80, pp. 14,15.)

MAPS OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

The New York Public Library has been digitizing the old, historical maps for their area, including those for parts of nearby New Jersey. There is a list of the ones posted online for researchers in the Sept/Oct. '08 *Genealogical Helper*, pp. 62, 63.

The earliest map I see listed is 1829, and the latest are two in 1888. I'm sure there is some variation in contents of the maps, but the author mentions the ability to magnify a map in order to read names-- of individual owners, apparently.

You might check a county or state archive for a state where your ancestor was an early settler to see whether local authorities there have posted similar old maps that might show where you ancestor lived. Even though the local county may not have posted such a map, it might be worth checking whether they have such a printed map that they could copy for you!

CENTER FOR RESEARCH LIBRARIES

The Center for Research Libraries is located in Chicago. It seems that after World War II, there were European countries who had been "rescued" by the U.S., and appreciated that fact, but could not repay the U.S. for the help they had received in money. A bill, PL49, was passed by the U.S. Congress whereby the Europeans repaid us by sending copies of publications from their countries to the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) in the U.S. These include such things as books, magazines, and newspapers.

CRL had been storing these materials for many years, and were even microfilming them, but now has decided to begin digitizing them. While they come mostly from European countries, there are also some from India and the Near East. You can read further about the project at <www.crl.edu/content.asp?l1=1&l2=53#wna>

(*Genealogical Helper*, Sept/Oct. 2008)

N. Y. GENEALOGICAL & BIOGRAPHICAL SOC.

Perhaps this item is indicative of the future of other genealogical societies as the Internet changes the circumstances for doing genealogy. With so many genealogically valuable records being shifted from print copies to digitized copies, the number of members supporting a local society seems to dwindle. This apparently has happened to the NYG&B.

The former NYG&B building has been sold for \$24 million, and is now on the market for other purposes for \$33 million. In the meantime, their large collection of books been donated to the New York Public Library. That means 75,000 volumes, 30,000 manuscripts, and 22,000 reels of microfilm to be moved!

With such a large collection, the NYPL will not be able to catalog all of it very quickly. It will probably be open to NYG&B members in reserved stacks, but not available to the public soon.

(Genealogy Blog.com, July 2008)

A WEBINAR --WHAT'S THAT???

With all the shifting of communications and records to the Internet, I was wondering how long it would be before Seminars went online. Today I received my first invitation to sign up for such an online Seminar. Sad to say it was for a financial seminar, not genealogy, but I'm sure the genealogy ones will soon follow. Are we really ready for this next step in doing genealogy? Perhaps we can't avoid it.

Apparently the correct term is "Webinars."

USING DNA TO TRACE ANCESTRY

An e-mail message from the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) also appeared on my e-mail list ---at least it wasn't the political mail I'd been receiving! They had an Annual Meeting on Nov. 6 and were distributing a revised explanation of what can and cannot be expected in reports of findings of searches of their databases of genetic testings. The text was being distributed for comments before final adoption. Where they got my e-mail url is anyone's guess.

If anyone is interested in contacting this group, the contact person's e-mail is <klong@ashg.org>.

Their annual meeting was held in Philadelphia, PA this year on Nov. 6. The Society was founded in 1948 for persons working in human genetics and fields related to it. Many genealogists contact them in trying to clarify the foreign countries from which their families emigrated. Such tests cost from \$100 to \$1,000 per test.

STABLE ROCKS IN KENTUCKY

Jim Burchell, of Manchester, KY was invited by a friend to examine a historic site on top of a mountain in Kentucky called Stable Rock. It had been used as a place to stable horses by both sides in the Civil War. After several years, Jim went to take a look.

In examining the nooks and crannies of the mountain top, he immediately recognized Ogam and Iberian writings, and realized that holes in some rocks represented patterns of several constellations. Details of his findings are published in *Midwestern Epigraphic Newsletter*, Vol. 24, #4, 2007.

One inscription translates to: "Scotland, Our Great Love." The only clue to the date of the carvings is a possible reference to ca. 130-170 A.D. It would be possible that parts of the carvings were thousands of years earlier. Much more study and searching in this location will be needed.

Almost certainly, prior to development of magnetic compasses, sailors found their way by the guidance of constellations. Could modern sailors do that today?

GERMAN--AMERICAN DAY

President George Bush officially declared--"Now, therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 6, 2008, as German-American Day. I encourage all Americans to celebrate the many contributions German Americans have made to our Nation's liberty and prosperity. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred thirty-third."

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THE MEETING IN JANUARY

Our first meeting in 2009 will be on January 11, 2009. It will be a Joint Meeting with the PSIG--The Pommern Special Interest Group, a special interest group associated with IGS.

Entitled "From Pomeranian Field to Chicago Factory", this talk by Brad Witt will describe the journey of an itinerant day laborer from Pomerania to America.

Pomerania was a sizeable area that is now part of Germany, but was in earlier days somewhat independent. They spoke their own language. Events of history sent waves of emigrants from Pomerania to settle mostly in Wisconsin before wider dispersal.

THE WEEK IN GERMANY

Germany doubled its team of men training the new Police Force for Afghanistan. The largest problem is suicide bombing by terrorists. -- The European Union members chose Hansjörg Haber of Germany to supervise a civilian monitoring mission in Georgia. It was deployed Oct. 1. -- Nov. 9 commemorated the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, when Nazis tried to wipe out the Jewish community in Germany. This year there was a joint Jewish-German commemoration of that failure. -- The German Foreign Office is providing 15 million Euros to help Afghanistan survive the upcoming cold winter. -- The last flights from Tempelhof Airport left on Oct. 30, 2008 as the airport inside Berlin prepared for closure. It was there U.S. airplanes landed to bring food to Berlin residents for their survival at the end of World War II by the Berlin Airlift. -- A display of pictures showing the Berlin Wall in 1986 and again in 1999, after the "Fall of the Wall", will tour the U.S. and Canada. -- German exports showed a surprising increase in September in spite of an economic slowdown. -- Berlin is hosting four major art exhibits, and there will be a special film exhibit in the U.S. -- A suicide bomber killed 5 children and 2 German soldiers training the new Afghan police force. -- German leaders congratulated Sen. Obama on his election as U.S. President. -- Germany is providing 50 billion Euros to prod the German economy. -- The Ice Breaker Polarstern returned to Bremen after circling the North Pole. -- The

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Immigrant Library Hours
Wednesdays 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm
Saturdays 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Sundays 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm
Closed for major holidays.

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Annual Membership, \$25, Family \$30
If publications desired by 1st Class mail, \$35.00

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world's largest Frankfurt Book Fair highlighted the literature and traditions of Turkey. -- Ambassador Klaus Scharioth attended both the Democratic and the Republican National Conventions as an observer. -- Germany doubled the size of its Police Training unit in Afghanistan. -- Germany will activate an International Renewable Energy Agency in 2009. -- The European Union Summit Meeting recommended holding a global financial summit. -- The 60th Frankfurt Book Fair was the largest such event ever held in the world. -- The German Government is suggesting actions to stabilize world finances. (TWIG, Oct. 2008)