



# Newsletter

Oct. 2006

Vol. 39, No. 9



## *Annual Luncheon Finalized*

The plans for our Annual January Luncheon and Installation of Officers have been finalized. We will be meeting again this year at the Handlery Hotel in Mission Valley on January 13, 2007. Our speaker for this all day seminar will be well-known genealogist and author, Nancy Ellen Carlsberg. Many of you may know her already from attending national genealogical conferences. She worked with Alex Haley on his book and is listed in Who's Who. She has published numerous books, many of which will be for sale at the meeting.

She will be discussing a variety of topics that will be of interest to family historians from beginner to advanced. Look for more information and the registration flyer in our November Newsletter. So, mark your calendar today to save this date. You won't want to miss this meeting.



## *2007 Board Nominees*

We are please to announce the nominees to the 2007 Board of Directors. They are;

- 2nd VP.....Jim Reynolds
- Treasurer.....Candice Booth
- Historian.....Mary Card
- Director-at-Large.....Joe Miller
- Nominating Committee.....Bob Cosgrove,  
Pam Journey, Willa Ramsay, Donna Swink (alt.).

The new slate of officers will be voted on by our members at the November general meeting. We are most grateful that they have volunteered to serve. We appreciate the work of this year's Nominating Committee in their recommendations. Please plan on attending the November meeting to vote and welcome in our new board members.

## **Oct. 14th Monthly Meeting St. Andrew's Church, noon**

### *World War II & Korean War Casualty Research*

In WW II alone, there were 406,000 killed, 600,000 wounded and 150,000 POWs. A significant number of our families were directly impacted by these events. Some MIAs have never been found, including some lost in training accidents state-side.

Our speaker, **William Beigel**, is an airport, harbor and transit security systems specialist by day and a professional military records researcher in his off-hours. Over the past ten years, he has helped over 500 clients worldwide research relatives in military, academic and archival record collections. He became interested in this area of research because of the death of his father's close relative, who was a B-17 gunner in Europe.

His presentation will cover current issues in military records research and will review a number of case studies. He will discuss various record sources, including some 'non-user friendly' records that can challenge even the best researchers. There will be ample time for questions.

So, if you have any WW II or Korean War relatives, you will want to hear this talk. Not only will you gain a greater knowledge and appreciation of research in this area, but it may even help bring closure to the experiences of those of our 'greatest generation' who fought in these wars.

Don't miss it! See you there.

The Newsletter is published monthly, except January, by the San Diego Genealogical Society and mailed to all current members. Submission deadline for articles and announcements is the 15th of the month for the following month. Inclusion is based solely on the discretion of the Editor and/or Board of Directors. Members are encouraged to submit materials for publication, subject to copyright provisions. Please contact the Editor for guidelines.

### 2006 Board of Directors

President.....Peter Steelquist  
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2nd Vice President.....Joan Carter  
Treasurer.....Candice Booth  
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Acting Newsletter Editor.....Peter Steelquist

Comments and suggestions can be e-mailed to the editor at [steelquist@aol.com](mailto:steelquist@aol.com) or left on the Library answering machine, 619-588-0065.

## *Local Author Search*

The San Diego City Public Library is searching for local authors who published a book in 2006. This is a great opportunity for San Diego's literary talents to be recognized. If you are a local author or know of one, please call the San Diego City Public Library at 619-236-5847 and let them know. The deadline for submission is Dec. 1, 2006.

The 41st. Annual Local Authors Exhibit will run through the month of Feb. 2007. There will be a special preview reception for the authors on Jan. 27, 2007. The publications will be displayed in the lobby of the Central Library.

## *Free Publication*

What if much of what you thought you knew about genealogy evidence and how to fit the pieces all together is just plain wrong? Would you keep doing the same things over and over again, getting the same dismal NIL (No Information Located) results? Or would you be willing to try something radically different? Something new and excitingly effective?

Nationally known genealogist Arlene Eakle, author of *The Source*, has graciously offered to mail anyone who asks, a free copy of her report, "Cutting Edge Documentation for your Genealogy". Just e-mail her ([arlene@arleneeakle.com](mailto:arlene@arleneeakle.com)) your mailing address (the report is illustrated and too long to email) and she will mail it to you free of charge, no strings attached.

## **President's Message**

Well, its membership renewal time again. I hope you take a moment to reflect on just how much your Society offers to the San Diego genealogical community and how much you personally get from being a member.

While I know you already realize all that we do, let me take a moment to remind everyone. Our prized library is the 2nd largest genealogy collection in San Diego County. It contains many valuable resources you won't find anywhere else. I hope you use it often and getting the most out of it to further your research. If you haven't visited it lately, there are many new additions to tempt you.

Our Newsletter is a first-rate publication that not only keeps you current on the Society's and other genealogical events but also contains interesting and educational articles for every level of researcher. If you have San Diego Co. roots, our 'Leaves & Saplings' quarterly journal publishes primary records that can't be found elsewhere. It contains original research that wouldn't be available otherwise.

A lot of work goes into bringing you timely and informative speakers at our monthly meetings. These recognized experts discuss the latest trends and sources for genealogical research you just wouldn't get any other way. If you are not attending our meeting regularly, you are missing out on truly exceptional opportunities to improve your skills.

We offer several research trips each year which not only take you to great research venues (SLC, LAPL, Allen Co. Library, etc.) but also let you get research help from other members. Every year our members make major break throughs in their research on these trips. Plan on signing up next time.

Our classes also help the 'learning curve' for computer programs (FTM, RootsWeb) and other subjects. Here, our members can benefit from the years and vast experience of other members. No matter what level of researcher you are, there is always something more (or new) to learn. I would hope you are taking advantage of these opportunities. If there is a class you would like to see offered, please speak up. Chances are others would be interested as well.

As you can see, there is a lot going on in your Society. And it all happens because of our members like you. Without you, we would not be the valuable resource we are. Please mail in your renewal form today. And if you can, please renew at a higher membership level. We can't continue all this without your support.

I personally want to thank you for your continued membership and ongoing support.

Peter Steelquist, President

SDGS Newsletter, Vol. 39, No.9

# Massachusetts Death Index Now Online



The Massachusetts Archives has created a free online index for all recorded deaths in the state from 1841 through 1910. While the Archives also has birth and marriage records as well as many other record holdings, only the deaths have been indexed online.

The database is very simple to use. You can search by first and last names, year, and city or town. You may also specify a start year and end year for your search. You simply enter whatever information you have, leave the unknown fields empty and then click SEARCH. A second or two later, all records that match your search parameters are displayed on your screen.

The search results include last name, first name, town, year, volume and page number. The information provided is strictly an index. It does not contain the details. You must contact the Massachusetts State Archives to obtain a copy of the original information which usually specifies the exact date of death and often also lists date of birth, surviving next of kin, cause of death, residence and more. There is a \$3.00 fee for each certificate requested.

The same records have been microfilmed and are available through the LDS Family History Centers. Images of the original records with full details are also available on a members-only section of the New England Historic Genealogical Society's web site.

To view the Massachusetts Death Index for the years 1841 through 1910, go to [www.sec.state.ma.us/vitalrecordssearch/VitalRecordsSearch.aspx](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/vitalrecordssearch/VitalRecordsSearch.aspx). If you have Massachusetts ancestors, be sure to check out the other materials at the Archives.

## San Diego Marriage Certificates 'Found'

Recently, the San Diego Historical Society re-discovered a collection of San Diego County marriages licenses. The 300 large volumes contain certificates from 1871 through 1959.

In addition to the names and occupations of the bride and groom, they list their ages, places of birth and origin, who performed the ceremony and names of witnesses. The volumes are now shelved in chronological order and they have undertaken the mammoth task of creating a searchable database. It is currently up to 1918. These records are available to researchers in the SDHS Research Library. Visit their web site at [www.sandiegohistory.org](http://www.sandiegohistory.org) for more information.

## Meeting in Review..... Sept. 2006

Our speaker, Eric Bernard, from National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), Laguna Niguel, kept us spellbound as he went through the resources available at the archives. While most of us only think of NARA for the Federal census records, he showed us their vast collection and how to access them.

He pointed out that NARA is in the process of name indexing their records but noted that it is a slow process. Now the best way to search for ancestors is to e-mail, phone or write them and they will perform manual searches. You will need to provide as much information as possible (approx. date, type of records, names, geographic location, etc.) to narrow the search. Currently, there are some gaps in the indexes. NARA has a 10 working-day turnaround time.

The major records types they have are court records, Records of Alien Enemies (WW I, WW II) and Federal Land Records. Court records include bankruptcy case files and criminal/civil case files. Bankruptcy files can contain debtor's petitions, summary of debts and assets, lists of creditors and dispositions. Criminal/civil files may have indictments, complaints, subpoenas, judgements, affidavits, depositions, briefs, transcripts, exhibits, etc. Even if ancestors or relatives were not involved in the crime, they can be included as witnesses or other parties to the case.

Alien Enemy Records primarily include Germans in WW I and Japanese, Italians and Germans for WW II. These case file documents contain questionnaires, examinations, identification cards, correspondence and even FBI records. These records are mostly for non-citizens. You will also need to know where they lived. If found, these files contain extensive genealogical information. The best way to search for these records is to e-mail NARA in Washington D. C. Expect a 30 turnaround time.

In discussing Federal Land Records, he briefly reviewed the history of the Federal land system. Some land records can be accessed through the Bureau of Land Management ([www.glorecords.blm.gov](http://www.glorecords.blm.gov)) while others are at NARA and include homestead records, survey plats, tract books, pre-1908 applications and patent case files.

He went on to discuss the online databases available at NARA. ARC (Archival Research Catalog) can be found at [www.archives.gov/research/arc/](http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/) and is keyword searchable by record group and series information. Be sure to read the 'How to Search' and FAQs pages.

The other database, AAD (Access to Archival Databases), contains name searchable records covering war records beginning with the Civil War, Irish famine emigrants to NYC, WW II Army Enlistment Records -- to name a few -- and is at <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/>.

Judging from the many questions, there was a lot more

# Google Does It Again

In Google's quest to "make all the world's information available", they have started a new service -- News Archive Search. It provides an easy way to search and explore historical archives. Users can search for events, people or ideas and see how they have been described over time. It provides two ways of searching: 'search articles' that presents articles in order of relevance or 'show timeline' which presents a timeline of events of articles associated with the query.

'News Archive Search' covers a large collection of historical archives including major newspapers, magazines, news archives and legal archives. Some content is already freely available (BBC News, Time Magazine, Guardian) while others may require a fee to get the full citation, although the index search is free. Sites like Newspaper Archive go back 200 years and have automated indexes as well as page images and claim to be adding a new page every second. Other sites searched include NewsBank, NewsTex, NexusLexus, AccessMyLibrary, ProQuest Archiver, even Ancestry's WWI Draft Registration forms -- just to name a few. It also picks up many independent newspapers.

In keeping with Google's leading edge service, there is an advanced search function that lets you do date restrictions, limit source databases or even restrict by any potential price range limits. Of course, this is in addition to their usual search operands ('or', " ", +, -).

So, what can the family historian use 'News Archive Search' for? First of all, it is a 'one stop shop' for newspapers and archived material. You don't need to go to a number of different sites to search. For newspaper searches, it will not only show obituaries but also social announcements and other news for names searched. It will also show if your relatives were involved in legal matters. If they were named in a brief, it has probably been indexed.

Google does not charge for this service but some of the databases may have a small fee to get the full article citation. Some of these databases are subscription based but keep in mind that you may have free access through other sources. The Godfrey Library (see Dec. 2004 Newsletter) has many and local libraries may have online access (see Dec. 2005 Newsletter). On NewspaperArchive, the index may have all the information you need (although it is scanned with 'optical recognition software' and may have some typing errors). (Don't forget, you can use the 'Ctl-F' search feature of your browser to do key word searches of the index box on this and other sites.)

Give 'News Archive Search' a try. See how many obituaries or marriage announcements you can find. You will be surprised at the scope and years of coverage. But be careful, it can become addictive. And don't forget to re-visit the site as it is expected to grow several  
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times over in the coming months. You can find it at: <http://news.google.com/archivesearch>.

## Library Notes.....Anna Acosta

Just back from a trip through the New England states after attending the FGS Conference. It was a huge conference -- maybe too big -- with the usual problem of 2-3 topics being covered during the same time frame and not being able to be in two places at once. There were 379 sessions and the syllabus was printed in 4 volumes - one for each day. It was nice to see former speakers we've had as well as to personally thank the editor of the new Internet Genealogy Magazine for sending us a supply to distribute at our last few meetings.

A lot of emphasis was placed on libraries and their value as we do research. Over and over speakers said, "the Internet is helpful, but we must check the original sources, which often isn't online, or not even micro-filmed." We were constantly warned about ceasing research when finding an abstract, since abstracts are often not as complete or accurate as necessary. (How many times have you read a census citing and then read the film and found the information was copied incorrectly?). Be sure to use the 'HOW TO' and other reference books in our own library to help find the sources.

I found that many counties in Pennsylvania have not had their records filmed and many are archived in unusual places that I didn't have time to get to. (Always need another trip don't we?). I found at least 3 books about PA that I will be ordering for our library. If there is a particular book you would like to have available in the library, please let me know.

I will be sending damaged books to the bindery in October or November so if you have a book you would like rebound for your personal library please let me know.

## FGS Conference Lectures Available

Couldn't make it to the recent FGS Conference in Boston? Don't despair. All the lectures presented are available in audio file format for downloading to your computer, i-pod or digital audio player. Nice thing is, they only cost \$1.99 each.

Even if you attended the conference, there may be some sessions you didn't attend or you want to hear again. This is a great way to distribute these and other lectures at minimum cost. And you can hear them again and again at home and even while driving.

You can log onto the Lulu.com site (see Aug. 2005 Newsletter) and order. The address for the FGS store is: <http://stores.lulu.com/fgs2006>. While there, check out the other genealogy related books and items for sale.

## *By Any Other 'Name'*

No one would deny that 'user contributed' databases have become an indispensable tool in genealogical research. Being able to access the GEDCOM files of other researchers has given all of us help in researching our own lines. Whether you use Rootsweb's WorldConnect, FamilySearch's Pedigree Resource File, Ancestry's OneWorldTree, GeneaNet, FamilyTreeGuide or others of the many online services, you will certainly benefit from the research others have done and gain insights for additional research of your own.

While every serious researcher knows that these 'leads' are only starting points, researching these databases has brought with them other issues that every user needs to be reminded and cautioned about. Namely, the use of name notations or acronyms for unknown or missing information.

When we don't know the name of an ancestor, we want to make it clear that we have searched and haven't been able to find it. Thus, "unknown" replaces the blank in the name field of our files. Other researchers may have resorted to using creative symbols like "?" (or multiple "???????", "----?----", etc.). Still others, in an effort to make it even more precise, have added "FNU, MNU, LNU" (for first name unknown, middle name unknown, last name unknown).

Just in case you think these are isolated occurrences, a recent check of WorldConnect revealed 4,503,994 "unknowns", 64,406 "ukn", 34,309 "LNU", 190,233 "???", 112,740 "??", 8,839 "-", and 1,136 ' ' ' [ditto marks]. Looking even further, there are 862,644 "Mrs." as a first name and 5,273 "Ditto" surnames (but be careful, it can be a legitimate surname). I think you see the issues.

So, why is this a problem if they are not real names? Well, unless you type in your search query just like it is in the database, it won't retrieve the data. Thus, if you don't type in "FNU" or "?" and that is the way another research input the data, you won't retrieve your possible ancestors. Even if you leave the field blank, it won't find it if another symbol or notation has been entered. Given that there are over 4.5 million "unknowns" alone, this could be significant problem and result in you not finding your ancestor.

So, what can you do to minimize this problem? Well, first, you need to be aware that other researchers can and will use various notations to replace missing data. Just knowing what they use can help you include them in your searches. Next, you need to know the subtleties of the various search criteria of the respective databases -- and they are all different. Know what the wildcard characters ( \*, ? , " ) are and how can you use them both alone and in combinations. It would probably be benefi-

cial to review the 'help' screens, 'how to use', FAQs and the 'advanced' search pages.

You can also change your search strategy to include other criteria like dates, place names, parent's names, etc. to limit the possible number of 'hits'. If names are unusual, try just using only first or last names. Don't forget to use collateral line names as well.

What else can you do to help with this problem? The not-so-simple answer is not to contribute to the problem. Unfortunately, there is no standard for indicating that a names is not known - hence all the confusion. Some old notation standards still prevail - like "(maiden name)" between a married woman's first and last name. This, however, can create a lot of confusion. Others have tried to standardize with 'em' dashes ( -- ) before and after a " ? ". While this may be clear on paper reports, it only compounds problems with database searches. While the use of acronyms may be clear to the researcher using them, others, particularly those newer to genealogy, may not know their meaning and confuse them with the actual name -- "oh, my new Fnu line".

The various computer genealogy programs can also help compound the issue. Some have options for including "unknown" in blank name fields of known spouses. World Family Tree can even try to extrapolate date information. The best bet here is to turn off these 'auto input fields' in the user preferences section of your software. However, keep in mind that sometime what appears on your computer screen is not actually included in your database file.

If you want to include notations regarding possible names, records researched or other citations, include them in your notes section. Most computer programs also have 'alias' name fields that can be used for nicknames. Name titles (Mr., Mrs., Jr., Dr., etc.) have their separate fields and should not be included in a name fields.

The clearest solution to the problem is to simply leave unknown information fields blank. Now that all our research results end up as computer input data in highly structured database fields (and in the exported GEDCOM files), we can no longer think of paper reports or screen images as our 'end product'. We need to think of how others will search the computer database files in years to come and benefit from our research. After all, if others can't find it, it may be lost forever.

Thanks to member Phyllis Quarg for suggesting this topic.

## *Welcome to Our New Members*

We want to welcome the following new member to the Society. Please introduce yourself to her at our next meeting. Thanks for becoming a member.

Jennifer **LIVENGOOD -- McLaughlin, Collier, Puckett, Yanks, Fletcher, Berg, Perliss**

# *Re-live History*

Ever wish you could step back in time and re-live the lives of your ancestors? Well, in a way you can by becoming a historical re-enactor.

Re-enactors recreate history by portraying the look, actions and lives of a person from a particular time period in history. And almost anyone of any age can get involved. All it takes is an unquenchable thirst for history, abiding patience and the fortitude to perhaps forgo some modern day conveniences, at least temporarily.

First, realize that it requires a commitment of both time and resources. Re-enactors take their roles very seriously and can even take 'authenticity' to extremes. In addition to the time needed to research and prepare a role, you can spend many hours a month engaging in actually re-creating the role. Also, reproduction clothing and props can cost several hundred -- even thousands -- of dollars. There can also be travel expenses to attend national conventions and events.

So, how do you begin creating your 'living history'? First, choose a time period and location. It could be the old West, Civil War or Colonial America (you might want to think twice about the Salem Witch Trials). Other popular periods for re-enactors are the Renaissance, medieval times or ancient Rome. Whichever you choose, it should also be a period in which you are intensely interested.

Next, you need to choose a 'persona' or character and a role to portray. Sometimes this is determined by an event itself or the locale. It can also be dictated by the reenactment group's needs. For family historians, the character could actually be one of your ancestors or at least represent an event or location associated with them.

As you develop the persona, it is essential to know as much as possible about their livelihood and lifestyle. This is where your training as a genealogist can be very helpful. It is also beneficial to portray a character whose trade or social status you share (e.g. lawyers portraying lawyers). This is also where knowing as much as possible about the time period and customs makes a difference. Once 'in character', re-enactors become that person.

Then, you will want to find a re-enactment group to participate with -- hopefully close to home. These groups not only have meetings and sponsor events but also become your 'support group' for historical and technical help. They often know sources for reproduction clothing and accessories and will often loan items to those just getting started. Some groups are associated with single events (e.g. San Pasqual Battle re-enactment) while others are more general and even hire out for weddings, corporate events, etc. There are numerous national, regional and local societies for all time periods. Start by asking at your local historical society and looking on your favorite

Internet search engine. The San Diego Historical Society's web site ([www.sandiegohistory.org](http://www.sandiegohistory.org)) has a comprehensive list of local societies and organizations.

Once you have chosen your character, developed your role and joined the re-enactment group, you will want to assemble your 'kit' (clothing, equipment, props). Your 'kit' should match your persona (age, occupation, social status) as well as the period and locale. There are a number of companies that supply reproduction clothing and patterns. The Internet is a great tool to find sources. (There are several in San Diego including the Horse's Mouth in Escondido). Another source can be local theater groups that periodically sell their old costumes.

So, what does San Diego offer for the re-enactor? There are many local venues that recreate history - the San Pasqual Battle, Old Town, Gaslamp District, Cabrillo Monument, Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, Renaissance Fair - just to name a few. Also, many museums have docents that dress in period costumes. A number of local groups have regular meetings and events including the San Diego Co. Muzzleloaders (mountain men), the American Civil War Society, Alpine Outlaws, Laguna Mountain Volunteer Assn., etc. There are also a number dedicated to medieval history and have weekend mock battles in local parks.

So, if you have ever thought of taking your interest in genealogy to a higher level, consider re-enacting as a way to bring your family history truly alive. Not only is it a lot of fun and will give you a unique insight into your past.

## *Descended From Sainthood?*

Could your ancestor be a Saint? (and not just figuratively). Well, it may not be as far-fetched as you think. It is said that one out of three Americans can prove that they have a blood relationship to at least one Saint.

A book, *'Saints Who Left Descendants and Their Ancestry'* by Brian Daniel, attempts to explain the ancient lineage of the Saints, with charts showing some lines. Included are Saints from many sources, including some Saints who are not yet canonized but still recognized as a Saint by some sources. The book includes about 110 Saints in all.

Included are Saint Margaret of Scotland, Saint Henry, Saint Louis IX, Saint Ethelbert and Saint Gregory. There are also lines from five Israelites; Levi, Judah, Zebulon, Benjamin and Joseph and their lines leading to the Saints, nobility and royalty.

You can view sample pages online at <http://briandstar.com> and purchase the book or CD version of the text (including a GEDCOM file). So, if you think Sainthood runs in your family, you probably will want a copy of this most interesting book.

## *The Meaning of Life.....*

Living with a saint is more grueling than being one.

# Year of Destiny.....

[Editor: This is the first in a series of articles highlighting a particular year in history and how it may have had a profound impact on the lives of our ancestors. Many times we overlook the non-history making or geographically distant events that, in fact, changed their lives. I hope this will provide you new insights to the events that helped determine their destiny.]



The year was 1815. James Madison was President, Congress was ready to admit Indiana as the 19th state of the union and Andrew Jackson had led his troops to victory

in the Battle of New Orleans to end the War of 1812. It was also the year that earth experienced one of its most spectacular natural disasters, causing what has become known as 'the Year Without a Summer'.

On the 11th of April on the Indonesian island of Sumbawa, Mt. Tambora, a volcano thought to be extinct, erupted, spewing 36 cubic miles of debris into the atmosphere - 100 times as much ash as from Mt. Saint Helens. Within an instant, 70 thousand people on this and neighboring islands were killed and the casualties quickly rose to more than 92 thousand.

The ash rose quickly -- more than 15 miles -- much higher than the layer that affects the weather. While the ash cloud had an immediate effect on the local weather patterns, it was the ash's sulfur content rising into the stratosphere that has a far greater impact on the long range climate changes. The sulfur dioxide gas reacts with water vapor to form tiny sulfuric acid drops. These reflect sunlight back to space, cooling the earth's surface.

The first signs that something was changing came with the snow fall that fell in the winter of 1815-16. Half way around the world in Hungary, the snow was brown. At Apulia, in southern Italy, which doesn't usually get snow, their snow fall was red. These strange colors were due to Tambora's ash mixing with water vapor high in the atmosphere. As the summer of 1816 approached, the true impact of eruption descended on the peoples of Europe. Descriptions of dusty smog hanging in day after day, cold and dreary rain and blustery weather - more like winter than summer -- prevailed.

In 1816, the peoples of Europe were still recovering from the Napoleonic wars and food and crops were still in limited supply. This arctic-type weather spread across the continent and devastated the crops. Multitudes began to starve. Those that survived are greatly weakened and disease becomes widespread. Over 100,000 died in Ireland due to Typhus. The famine spread all across Europe. The people could finally stand no more.

In England, the people carried banners with "Bread or Blood" and vandalized village after village. In France, rioting crowds attacked grain carts on their way to town. In Switzerland, mobs seized Russian grain shipments at the boarder. The governments of Europe were not equipped to handle the demands of the people for food and relief. Tens of thousands starved to death. But just as many fled to America to escape the carnage and rebuild their lives.



But the impact of Tambora's eruption was being equally felt in America. In June, 14 months after the eruption, the skies over New England turned icy cold with temperatures plunging below freezing and five days of snow fell in the Northeast. Snow fall persisted sporadically through July and August. The summer had only two extended periods without frost or near freezing temperatures. Many diary entries recorded these unusual events. Flying birds fell from the sky, dead from the cold. The cold wave destroyed crops and killed livestock. An estimated 75% of America's corn crop was ruined. Food shortages became common place and agricultural prices skyrocketed.

However, the worst shortages did not appear until the spring of 1817. In his final diary entry for 1816 Adino Brackett wrote; "This past summer and fall have been so cold and miserable that I have from despair kept no account of the weather. It could have been nothing but a repetition [sic] of frost and drought."

Farmers were devastated and could not recover from their losses. Things were so bad in the Northeast many just gave up, left everything and ventured west. This was, in fact, the reason for the first 'spike' in westward migration. And most never knew that all this was all due to a volcano that erupted over a year before, half way around the world.

As you look at your ancestors and what happened in their lives in 1816 and 1817, stop for a moment and think how they could have been impacted by this monumental event. You may never have realized that their lives -- and yours -- were profoundly changed by 'the Year Without a Summer'.

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### **SDGS Event Calendar**

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings held at;

St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, 8350 Lake Murray Blvd. (at Jackson Dr.) San Diego

Oct. 7 -- FTM Users Group, Society Library, 10 a.m. to noon

Oct. 11 -- Board Meeting, Society Library, 7 p.m.

Oct. 14 -- RootsMagic Users Group, 10 a.m. to noon, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

Oct. 14 -- Monthly Meeting, Military Records, William Beigel, noon

Nov. 4 -- FTM Users Group, Society Library, 10 a.m. to noon

Nov. 8 -- Board Meeting, Society Library, 7 p.m.

Nov. 11 -- RootsMagic Users Group, 10 a.m. to noon, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church

Nov. 11 -- Monthly Meeting, Census Records, Randy Seaver, noon

Dec. 3 - 10 Salt Lake City trip to the Family History Library. See flyer

Jan. 13 -- Annual Luncheon & Seminar, see flyer.

**View All San Diego County Genealogy Events at: [www.cgssd.org/events.php3](http://www.cgssd.org/events.php3)**