



LINKS



The Monthly Newsletter of South Bay Genealogical Society



DECEMBER 2025

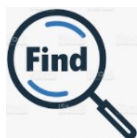
SBGS News & Information

Vol 31 No 9

Guest Speaker – December 16th



Karen Fortin
presents



WorldCat and ArchiveGrid: Finding Books, Manuscripts, and More



A treasure trove of genealogical material is available in books, manuscripts, and other print resources. However, much of this material is scattered in libraries and archives throughout the country. WorldCat and ArchiveGrid are online resources that allow you to search many of these repositories to identify and locate materials on the families and topics you are researching.



December Menu

Swedish Meatballs
w/ Egg Noodles, Veggie

OR

Vegetarian Meal:
Egg Plant Parmesan
and Veggie

Meals include:
Salad, Rolls, Coffee & Tea
(hot/iced) & Dessert

Any questions, call
Vicki: 360-608-1647



Genealogy Tech Forum

Monday – Dec 1st – via Zoom



10:30 to 12:00 noon

To join in, use this link:



<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89121558159?pwd=zJCcv8yFkdMO3DrnImM3Hd3TaDKub1.1>

Meeting ID: 891 2155 8159 Passcode: 402463

Topic:

Exploring AI for Genealogy - Part 2

Please log in a few minutes before start time.

Mail Your Reservation in Now!

Reservations for the SBGS luncheon meetings must be in **9 DAYS** prior to the luncheon. December reservations must be in the SBGS post office box by

Thursday, Dec 7th!

Allow 4-5 days for mailing!



Introducing our Guest Speaker

Karen's love of history, especially family history, led her to an interest in genealogy. She began volunteering with the Pinellas Genealogy Society in Largo, FL in 2012, and was the society's president from 2014-2017.



Karen received a Bachelor's Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of South Florida. She worked at the Barbara S. Ponce Public Library in Pinellas Park, FL for 30 years before deciding to focus on genealogical research. Karen began providing genealogy and history presentations in 2016 and has lectured at various genealogical societies and public libraries.

Next meeting Dec 16 ~ The Elk's Lodge, 1630 S US Hwy 41, Ruskin ~ Lunch 12 noon/Program



PAY IN ADVANCE



Sign Up for Next Month's Reservation

You may want to try our "Pay in Advance" plan so you won't miss the next luncheon meeting because you forgot to mail in your reservation. We hope this will help so you won't miss the deadline. So don't forget your check book.

When you arrive for the current month's luncheon meeting, you can pay for the next month's luncheon and select your meal. This will alleviate these problems:

- Forgetting to mail your check & reservation on time
- Being too late to mail your check & reservation
- Missing the luncheon because the deadline has passed
- Plus you'll save a stamp (now 78¢) & envelope

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION

Reminder: Checks are not deposited upon receipt. Sometimes it may be a couple weeks or more before they are deposited.



January 20 Luncheon Meeting

Teriyaki Chicken OR Vegetable Stir Fry

Guest Speaker Peggy Jude

Presents

**Figuring Out a Mystery Match:
How Am I Related to This Person?**



CHRISTMAS AN ANCIENT HOLIDAY



The middle of winter has long been a time of celebration around the world. Centuries before the arrival of the man called Jesus, early Europeans celebrated light and birth in the darkest days of winter. Many peoples rejoiced during the winter solstice, when the worst of the winter was behind them and they could look forward to longer days and extended hours of sunlight.

In Scandinavia, the Norse celebrated Yule from December 21, the winter solstice, through January. In recognition of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would bring home large logs, which they would set on fire. The people would feast until the log burned out, which could take as many as 12 days. The Norse believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or calf that would be born during the coming year.



The end of December was a perfect time for celebration in most areas of Europe. At that time of year, most cattle were slaughtered so they would not have to be fed during the winter. For many, it was the only time of year when they had a supply of fresh meat. In addition, most wine and beer made during the year was finally fermented and ready for drinking.

In Germany, people honored the pagan god Oden during the mid-winter holiday. Germans were terrified of Oden, as they believed he made nocturnal flights through the sky to observe his people, and then decide who would prosper or perish. Because of his presence, many people chose to stay inside.



Source: whychristmas.com



Christmas Tree Trivia

77 million Christmas trees are planted each year.

Between 1887-1933 a fishing schooner called the *Christmas Ship* would tie up at the Clark Street bridge in Chicago and sell spruce trees from Michigan to Chicagoans.

In the first week, a tree in your home will consume as much as a quart of water per day.



Christmas trees generally take 6-8 years to mature.

California, Oregon, Michigan, Washington, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina are the top Christmas tree producing states.



Source: history.com

Research Tip

If you find something online and the website won't let you download the article (or picture), take a screenshot. For Windows Snipping Tool, press Windows key + Shift + S for snip options. On a Mac, hit Shift + Command and use the crosshairs to select the article.



CONTACTS



SBGS: southbaygs@gmail.com

SBGS website: <https://southbaygenealogy.org/>

Roots Magic Help – Beth Clarke: beth7938@gmail.com

Luncheon Reservations – Vicki McDonnell: 360-608-1647

Membership – Cathy Rebhun: cathy33596@yahoo.com

Programs/Newsletter – Dru Thomas: sbgsdruthomas@gmail.com

REMINDER

Free

December 9, 2025
12:30pm (In-person only)



What's New with Family Tree Maker 2024?

A special in-person presentation
with **Mark Olsen**



Riverview Library
9951 Balm-Riverview Rd
Riverview FL



Join us for a special program covering the latest FTM 2024 features, FTM usage tips, tree management, and more, with plenty of time for Q&A. Don't miss this exclusive occasion for the Florida Gulf Coast Genealogy community. We hope you will join us for this event. It's free!

Sign up as soon as possible. Click on the link and follow along until you get a confirmation and print out your requested ticket(s).

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1748976177829?aff=oddtcreator>



Free Websites for Resources from Libraries and Archives

Allen County Public Library

<https://www.genealogy.acpl.lib.in.us/>

Though based in Indiana, this library's online reach extends much further—reflecting its status as the nation's second-richest genealogy library. Special collections focus on Native American, African American, military and family Bible records.



Ancestry Library Edition

Your local library may offer you access to Ancestry.com's immigration, census, vital and other records through Ancestry Library Edition. The library has to pay, of course, but it's free to you as a patron.



ArchiveGrid <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>

An offshoot of 101 Best Websites fave WorldCat, ArchiveGrid searches more than 7 million descriptions of archival records from 1,400 different institutions. Learn about historical documents, personal papers, family histories and other materials that may mention your ancestors. A clickable map makes it easy to find archives near you.

Digital Public Library of America <https://dp.la/>

One click searches more than 47 million digitized items from libraries, archives and museums, or you can navigate via interactive timelines and maps. Your searches also include FamilySearch's growing free digital historical book collection.

HathiTrust <https://www.hathitrust.org/>

Log in with credentials from a participating institution such as a university to get the most out of this digital library's almost 17 million total volumes and 6 billion pages. But there's plenty here accessible to the general public, too.



(continued on page 4)



Swap Table

Members can donate, share & swap genealogy materials. If you have books, magazines or newsletters you no longer want, bring them to the next meeting and place them on the swap table.

Once you are finished with items you found on the Swap Table, if you no longer want them, please consider returning them for others to enjoy.



History Tidbits: Presidential Pets

Andrew Jackson's pet parrot was an African Grey parrot named Poll (or Polly). The bird was originally purchased for Jackson's wife, Rachel, but after her death, it became Jackson's constant companion. Poll became famous for learning Jackson's "salty language" and is said to have cursed loudly at his funeral, eventually having to be removed from the ceremony



You might be a Genealogist if.....



you would rather read the news from 1925 than 2025.

Genealogy

a search for our greatest treasures
our Ancestors



GRANDMA'S CURES

Blood Stains

Blood stains on clothes? Not to worry! Just pour a little peroxide on a cloth and proceed to wipe off every drop of blood. Works every time!



Free Websites for Resources from Libraries and Archives



(continued from page 3)



Library of Congress <https://loc.gov/>

Though not specifically focused on genealogy, the nation's library has plenty to offer online, including the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections and its own comprehensive catalog.

National Archives and Records Administration

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

Read all about the genealogical treasures stored at the National Archives, order military and other records, and browse historical maps and photos. Access to Archival Databases serves up files ranging from WWII enlistments to passenger lists for millions of German, Irish, Russian and Italian immigrants.



Midwest Genealogy Center

<https://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy>

This site from the Mid-Continent Public Library in Independence, Mo., taps one of the nation's largest genealogy collections. Online extras include an index to US Railroad Retirement Board pension records.



New York Public Library Digital Collections

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>

The cool factor is off the charts at this handsome home to more than 900,000 digitized prints, photographs, maps, manuscripts, videos and other items. The site's maps and atlases alone are worth a visit.



WorldCat <https://search.worldcat.org/>

Find your family history in 3 billion items at 10,000 of the world's libraries, then click to see holdings nearest you.



David Fryxell, *Family Tree Magazine*
Newsletter, 9 Jan 2024



Murphy's Law of Genealogy

When you finally find the microfilmed probate records of your missing link to a rich and/or famous line, the book will be so tightly bound that you can only make out the first two letters of the name of the one who MAY be your ancestor.



Good Advice for Genealogists



Some think it's best to grow a family tree one leaf at a time—but as with the spring, you may find that many buds can be produced at the same time.



Genealogy Q & A



SURNAMES

Q: How did people get their last names and how did last names come about?

A: Onomatologists are people who study names. They say surnames – like nearly everything else – came about because of money.



Around the year 1000, Western Europe began to develop systems of credit. As the population grew, it got tougher to know who owed them.

If Peter were to pay Paul, it became important to know which Peter owed which Paul. So last names, or descriptive names indicating which Peter or Paul, began. At the time, Peter or Paul did not even know or care that a descriptive name was attached to their first name. Nor was the same descriptive name used with each transaction.

At this time in Western Europe – and in many other cultures as well – surnames evolved from four main sources:

Locality: People named Brooks, Wood and Oakes probably lived by a brook, wood or oak trees. Scott was probably from Scotland.



Father's First Name: Johnson was the son of John, and Williamson was the son of William.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please Renew Your Membership ASAP!



It's that time again. Your membership dues renewal is due by December 31st. Don't delay. Mail in your dues today so you don't forget. \$25 per household. The renewal form is attached so please include it with your check payable to:

South Bay Genealogical Society

If possible, please use remit address on form and mail your check directly to our Membership Director, Cathy Rebhun, or bring it to the next luncheon meeting. Note "membership" on your check memo.

On the Bookshelf

The First American Cookbook: A Facsimile Of "American Cookery," 1796

by Amelia Simmons



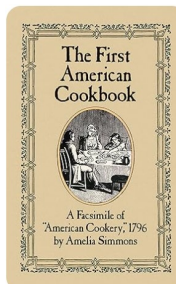
The holiday season makes me think of holiday feasts, so this month's Bookshelf article is a little different. It is not a book with a typical historical topic and it is not recently published. However, it is interesting and sheds light on a fascinating aspect of our ancestors' daily lives. The First American Cookbook is a facsimile of the first known cookbook published in America and intended for an American audience – "American Cookery" by Amelia Simmons, published in Connecticut, in 1796.



What did our early American ancestors cook for their holiday feasts? This book includes recipes for familiar favorites such as "To Dress a Turkey," "Pumpkin Pudding [Pumpkin Pie]," "Gingerbread," and the "Christmas Cookey." You will also find less well-known recipes (at least today), such as "Johny Cake," "Indian Slapjack," "Spruce Beer," and "To Dress a Turtle." One note of caution: If you would like to try out any of these recipes (providing the original ingredients can be found), be sure to check the "Errata" and glossary sections at the back of the book. The errata correct errors that were included in the first printing, and the glossary provides an explanation of the terms used at the time.

During the Colonial Period, our New England ancestors developed a style of cooking that utilized ingredients and methods unique to the New World. This book presents some of the first known printed references to this distinctly American-style way of cooking. Happy Holidays!

Article courtesy of Karen Fortin



Genealogy Q & A



(continued from page 4)



Office or Occupation: Marshall, Baker, Smith, Miller and even Treadwater (a sailor) are examples.

Nicknames: These might include Little, Small, Stout – even Crooke.



Names that don't appear to fall into these categories often actually do – but in another language.



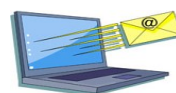
Name experts say African-Americans did not get their surnames, for the most part, from their slave owners, as some people assume. Once freed, why would they name themselves after the masters of their misery? Instead, they chose names that were well-known or from prestigious families in the South.



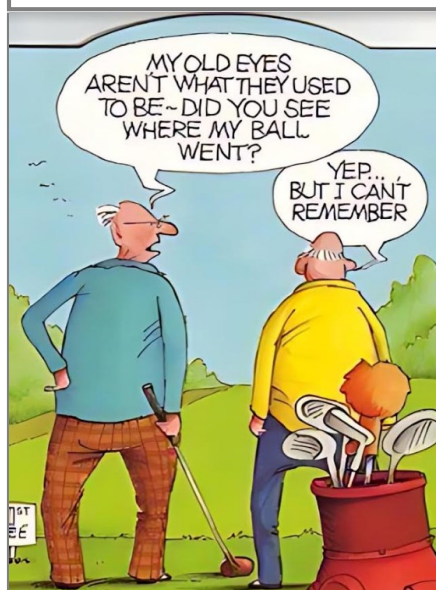
Source: Knight Ridder Newspapers

Whenever you change your address or e-mail, please notify SBGS at:

southbaygs@gmail.com



Genealogy Funnies



Don't forget! South Bay Genealogical Society has a Facebook page. Check it out at:

www.facebook.com/groups/567612300073587/

Or just go to Facebook.com and do a search for South Bay Genealogical Society

Director Scott Niblick periodically posts lots of good information for all you genealogists to peruse. So be sure to surf over to the SBGS Facebook page in your daily computer routine. Who knows! You may learn some good stuff!



Come to the luncheon meeting a bit early and enjoy the

Round Table Discussion.

It convenes at 10:30am prior to the luncheon meeting. Bring your questions and the "group" could help you find the answers. If you have not attended this SBGS "EXTRA" give it a try and join the group.

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Genealogy Task



Pick five online record collections you haven't searched in a while. Try a new technique, or search for different name variations.



Record RX



Almost every genealogical record has the potential to transfer some disease that can infect your family tree. Gather as many records as you can about a name or date, then analyze and compare data from each source.

Tombstones: Not everything carved in stone is accurate, including names and dates on tombstones.



Birth Certificates: Even official records can contain errors such as misspelled names.

Marriage Certificates: It wasn't uncommon for spouses-to-be to lie about their ages to avoid needing parental permission.



Military Records: Some young men made themselves older so they could serve.

Military

Naturalization Records: Foreign birthplaces might be misspelled; other information recalled from years ago could be incorrect.

LAND RECORDS

Land Records: Not all states required a dower release, so if you don't see that included in a man's land transaction, don't assume that the wife didn't relinquish her dower. It's not true that a wife's relative had to witness the sale to protect her interests.



Family Bibles: Cross-check the entries with the date the Bible was published. If the births and deaths predate the publication, they were entered after the event occurred.



Divorce Records: Divorce petitions can sizzle with juicy details. Just remember there are two sides to every story, and the parties may have exaggerated to gain sympathy.

City Directories: Many immigrants won't show up in directories until a few years after arriving. Frequent moves to better housing might explain why they are missed.

U.S. City Directories

Family Tree Magazine, Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, Oct/Nov 2012



SHADES OF HISTORY



Cleopatra Married Two of Her Brothers

Cleopatra, the queen of ancient Egypt, was married to her co-ruler and brother Ptolemy XIII in approximately 51 BC, when she was 18 years old and he was a mere 10 years old!

Then—just four years later—Ptolemy XIII drowned while trying to escape a battle. Cleopatra then married his younger brother, Ptolemy XIV, when he was aged 12.

Source: *newsweek.com*



THE REAL SANTA CLAUS HOHOHO!

The Weekly Kansas City Star: December 2, 1936
Santa Claus (some records spell the name Clause) was born in Blue Lick, Missouri, the son of a farmer. "Naturally, when I was a child, I took a lot of punishment over my name. I continually was the object of jokesters, and as I grew older, the name had its drawbacks," said Claus in a 1936 interview. In attempting to explain his unusual name, he said, "My father had a sense of humor."

It wasn't until 1929 that Claus's fame extended farther than his hometown. While working on the Missouri River, he broke his leg. Papers all over the country carried the story of Santa's accident, bringing fame to the young father, now living in Marshall, Missouri.

Jenny Ashcraft, Newspapers.com blog, 15 Dec 2022

Thanks to SBGS member Lynn Freeland for sharing



**IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHECK FOR DUES ONLY
DIRECTLY TO OUR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, CATHY REBHUN.**

**(Make check payable to South Bay Genealogical Society)
OR BRING IT TO THE LUNCHEON MEETING. THIS WILL MAKE IT
MUCH EASIER FOR OUR RESERVATION & MEMBERSHIP
DIRECTORS. THANK YOU!**

(A separate check for your luncheon meeting goes to our PO Box 5202-SCC)

===== CUT ✂ HERE =====

Please renew my Membership to South Bay Genealogical Society for 2026

Membership Renewal of **\$25.00 per household** is due December 31, 2025

When you renew, please bring your badge to the next meeting so it can be updated to show dues paid.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Make check payable to South Bay Genealogical Society and mail to Membership Director:

Cathy Rebhun – 5944 Watercolor Dr, Lithia, FL 33547

(Please note Membership on your check memo space)

===== CUT ✂ HERE =====

Reservation for DEC 16, 2025, SBGS Luncheon at the Elk's Lodge, 1630 US 41 S, Ruskin

Lunch starts at 12 noon followed by Speaker's Program at 1pm

Please reserve luncheon(s) for: _____

Meal choice: Swedish Meatballs _____ Vegetarian meal: Egg Plant Parm _____

_____ A check for **\$18.00** per meal is enclosed. Please note lunch choice on your check memo space.

**Mail this reservation slip, along with your check payable to South Bay Genealogical Society, to:
South Bay Genealogical Society - PO Box 5202 - Sun City Center FL 33571**

Reservations must be RECEIVED in the PO Box by December 7