LINKS

The Monthly Newsletter of South Bay Genealogical Society

DECEMBER 2026 | ***SBGS News & Information*** | **Vol 32 No 9**

Next meeting Dec 15 ~ The Elks Lodge, 1630 S US Hwy 41, Ruskin ~ Lunch 12 noon Program 1pm

Guest Speaker – December 15th
Carol Rooksby Weidlich



presents



Virtual Cemeteries: What Are They and How Do I Use Them?



Virtual Cemeteries and online memorials can be found at multiple websites on the Internet. From the most popular Find A Grave to Geneanet, or the oldest virtual cemetery - The World Wide Cemetery, these websites offer burial information and memorials for your loved ones which may contain unknown family connections, family information and photos.



Genealogy Tech Forum

Monday – Dec 7th – via Zoom

10:30 to 12:00 noon
To join in, use this link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81816228126?pwd=AJV4asc2K58i87KRNJwGG6P10xmS0A.1

Meeting ID: 818 1622 8126 Passcode: 968253

Open Topic

So bring your questions to the GTF

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 6th!

Allow 4-5 days for mailing!















December Menu

Swedish Meatballs
on Egg Noodles, Veggie
OR
Eggplant Parmesan
and Veggie
OR
Lactose free Meal
Swedish Meatballs w/
Lactose free noodles & Veggie

Meals include:
Salad, Rolls, Coffee,
Iced Tea and Dessert

Any questions, call
Vicki: 360-608-1647



Introducing our Guest Speaker



Our guest speaker is Carol Rooksby Weidlich. She was born and raised in Rochester, NY and relocated to Connecticut for school and lived most of her adult life in the Hartford area. She began serious family history and genealogy research in 1998.

In 2000, she and her husband Jim took early retirement and relocated to Florida, settling in Fort Myers. However, in September 2022, hurricane Ian did extensive damage to their home and they moved inland to the Villages.

Carol is past President of the Lee County Genealogical Society, Inc; a member of the Jefferson County Genealogy Society in NY; and a member of the Estero Island Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and their newsletter editor. Carol is researching family history in New York; Connecticut; Ontario, Canada; England and Germany.

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 82¢) & envelope

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



January 19 Luncheon Meeting

Baked 1/4 Chicken
Vegetarian: Vegetable Stir Fry
Lactose: Baked 1/4 Chicken



Guest Speaker Debbie Smyth

Presents

Disconnected Connections: A Case Study of Family Lore and an MPE

ECHOS OF THE PAST



Cold War Reaches Boiling Point

While the world watched the tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, they didn't know just how close they came to destruction.



The US Navy dropped harmless depth charges on a submerged Russian submarine off the coast of Cuba to try and force it to surface. The crew, believing that World War Three had begun, argued whether they should launch the nuclear torpedo that they had on board, and came close to a unanimous vote to launch.

Luckily, Senior Officer Vasili Arkhipov cast the one vote needed to stop the impending destruction. *Source: Dan Snow – historyhit.com*

2026-2027 Board of Directors South Bay Genealogical Society

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(area code 813 except noted)

Christmas Tidbits

1. Christmas supposedly marks the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25. But there is no mention of December 25 in the Bible and most historians actually believe he was born in the spring.



2. December 25 was probably chosen because it coincided with the ancient pagan festival Saturnalia, which celebrated the agricultural god Saturn with partying, gambling,and gift-giving.



3. Many of the popular Christmas traditions today found their roots in Saturnalia: Branches from evergreen trees were used during winter solstice as a reminder of the green plants that would grow in spring when the sun gods grew strong.



4. These evergreen branches became the foundation of our Christmas tree. Germans are thought to be the first to bring "Christmas trees" into their homes at the holidays and decorate them with cookies and lights.

Source: etonline.com

Research Tip

Start website searches by leaving most of the search fields blank. Then refine your search or use filters to target the result.



CONTACTS





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Membership - Cathy Rebhun: cathy33596@yahoo.com
Programs/Newsletter - Dru Thomas: sbgsdruthomas@gmail.com

THE TWELVE DAYS OF A GENEALOGY CHRISTMAS

On the Twelfth day of Christmas,
My true love gave to me,
Twelve census searches,
Eleven printer ribbons,
Ten e-mail contacts,
Nine headstone rubbings,
Eight birth and death dates,
Seven town clerks sighing,
Six second cousins,
Five coats of arms,
Four GEDCOM files,
Three old wills,
Two CD-ROMS
And a branch in my family tree.

Source: freepages.rootsweb.com

South Bay Genealogical Society
PO Box 5202
Sun City Center FL 33571

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 then, please consider returning them for others to enjoy.



IMMIGRATION Q&A

How can I trace immigrants before passenger lists began in 1820?

The Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, searchable via Ancestry.com www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7486, indexes a variety of resources naming early immigrants. Use the source information to locate a copy of the original record, if possible.

Diane Haddad Family Tree Magazine Nov/Dec 2025

What Is My Ancestor's Maiden Name? 5 Tips for Finding Out

Finding the maiden names of your female ancestors can be a real challenge. We've assembled five tips to help you track them down.

Researching your female ancestors can often come with a variety of unique challenges. Women generally took their husbands' last names. When photographed, women were generally listed under their married name, or not at all. Here are some helpful hints to help you discover your female ancestors' maiden names.

1. Research Indirect Records

Research the woman indirectly, seeking records of her relatives—husband, father, siblings and children. This strategy is also known as collateral research. She may be named as an heir, witness or traveling companion. A letter may mention her, too.

2. Try Searching Marriage Records

Marriage records are most likely to contain a woman's maiden name. If you notice from censuses most of her children were born in one county, start your marriage records search there. Look for a certificate and license application in county records. Churches may have marriage bonds or banns. Study historical newspapers, too, for an announcement.

3. Follow Her Children

Seek records on each of a woman's children, even those not in your line, including birth and baptism records, marriage records and death records. One may give a maiden name if others don't. Also note others named, especially witnesses, as they may be her relatives.

(continued on page 4)

You might be a Genealogist if.....

you get chatting with a telemarketer person, and at the end of the conversation you've persuaded them they should start tracing their family tree, and they haven't sold you a thing.

GRANDMA'S TIPS

When you get a splinter, reach for the scotch tape before resorting to tweezers or a needle. Simply put the scotch tape over the splinter, then pull it off. Scotch tape removes most splinters painlessly and easily.

What is My Ancestor's Maiden Name?

(continued from page 3)

4. Do Some Cemetery Research

In the tombstone, look at plots near hers, since families often were buried near each other. Study the caretaker's burial records for more information about those people, and to see if anyone was buried nearby without a headstone.

5. Find Evidence to Support or Refute Potential Names

Once you have a guess at a surname, start researching families in the area with that surname to see if any have children with your female ancestor's first name. Keep note of all the clues that support, as well as those that refute, the conclusion you've found your ancestor's maiden name. It's likely that a collection of clues will lead to her name, rather than a single momentous record that states, "I, Mary Smith Pearson…."

The Editors of Family Tree Magazine Newsletter - 26 May 2026

Women That Made History



Mourning Dove (1884–1936)

Author

Hum-ishu-ma or Mourning Dove (Christine Quintasket), born on the Colville Indian reservation in 1884, was forced to give up her native language at the mission school she attended. She worked most of her life as a migrant laborer, writing at night. Her 1927 novel Cogewea, The Half-Blood, was among the first to be published by a Native American woman. Her later books include Coyote Stories, legends told by her grandmother and other tribal elders.

Katharine Andrew, Family Tree Magazine Newsletter, 26 May 2026

Murphy's Law of Genealogy

You learn that your great aunt's executor just sold her life's collection of family genealogical materials to a flea market dealer 'somewhere in New York City."

Good Advice for Genealogists

If your family members won't talk about a particular relative, a seasoned genealogist knows they are keeping mum about something very interesting.

Genealogy Q&A

WWII Women's Army Corps

Q: I'm looking for records of my aunt's service in the Women's Army Corps during World War II. Does the National Archives have these?

A: The answer is a big "maybe," according to the National Archives (http://archives.gov). You can start your research and get some basic information by searching the World War II Army Enlistment Records, online in the Archives' Access to Archival Databases. The index is also available on FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org). These records include some 141,000 Women's Army Corps (WAC) enlistees. But even if you find your aunt listed, her service record may not have survived a 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis (http://archives.gov/st-louis). The blaze destroyed about 80 percent of the records for personnel discharged between Nov. 1, 1912, and Jan. 1, 1960.

But the NPRC may have a "B" registry file (https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/fire-1973) for your aunt—auxiliary sources used to reconstruct her military service record.

David A. Frxyell, Family Tree Magazine Newsletter, 6 Jun 2026

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

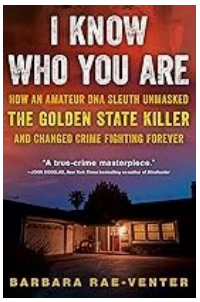


I Know Who You Are: How an Amateur DNA Sleuth Unmasked the Golden State Killer and Changed Crime Fighting Forever *By Barbara Rae-Venter*

DNA home test kits have forever changed the scope of resources available to genealogists, providing new tools that can be used to uncover broken family connections and long-buried secrets. But, as we saw in 2018 when it was announced that genetic genealogy was used to help catch the notorious Golden State Killer, these tools have implications far beyond family history research.

Barbara Rae-Venter, the amateur genealogist whose efforts made it possible to identify the killer, Joseph DeAngelo, attempted to avoid the limelight at first but eventually came forward to ensure that accurate information was provided regarding the investigation. In the wake of the introduction of investigative genetic genealogy as a tool to identify criminals, there has been considerable discussion and debate about the ethics of our DNA information being used in this way. Should DNA, the very essence of our identities, be used to covertly investigate our relatives or does the threat to public safety posed by violent criminals outweigh our right to genetic privacy? Who should make the decisions on what is and isn't allowable and how far it should be taken?

In Rae-Venter's new book, *I Know Who You Are: How an Amateur DNA Sleuth Unmasked the Golden State Killer and Changed Crime Fighting Forever*, she provides details of how she became involved in the case and how she helped solve it, along with several other cases that she has been part of. She also discusses her views of the ethics involved and how the backlash from the media, experts, and genealogists have altered the ability of investigative genetic genealogists to assist law enforcement. However, the genie is now out of the bottle and, just as with amateur and professional genealogical research, the power of these new tools has had a profound impact on how violent crimes can be solved both now and well into the future.



Courtesy of Karen Fortin

The Real Santa Claus



HO HO HO!

The Weekly Kansas City Star

December 15, 1937



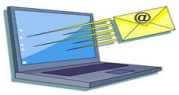
Letters addressed to Santa Claus began arriving at the Claus home. Claus was a part-time minister and struggled to support his family, taking on odd jobs, including plumber and ditch digger. Nevertheless, he worked hard to respond to each child's letter. In 1935, he appeared on the national radio broadcast for Ripley's Believe It or Not. His fame spread, and soon Claus was responding to 6,000 letters each holiday season. When the postage became a financial strain, others stepped in to help. Claus received checks from the local Chamber of Commerce and even Hollywood actress Mae West.

Jenny Ashcraft, Newspapers.com blog, 15 Dec 2022 - Thanks to SBG member Lynn Freeland for sharing



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

southbaygs@gmail.com







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!

Genealogy Funnies







Come to the luncheon meeting a bit early and enjoy the

Round Table Discussion.

It convenes at 10:30 am 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.

AMUSING



Steven Marsh 1958-2009
Manor Park Cemetery and Crematorium
Forest Gate, London Borough of Newham,
Greater London, England

TOMBSTONE

SURNAME RESEARCH

What is a surname?

Surnames, also called family names and last names, are names added to the end of a person's first or "given" name. The creation and adoption of surnames are largely based on culture and nationality. It's believed the Chinese adopted the practice of hereditary family names as early as 2852 BC. England began relying on them around 1000 AD. In some cultures, Filipino and Turkish for example, last names weren't readily used until as late as the 19th and 20th centuries.

Where does your last name come from?

Surname origins tend to fall into one of four categories: patronymic (named from the father), occupational, nickname or place name. According to Elsdon Smith, author of American Surnames (Genealogical Publishing Co.), a survey of some 7,000 last names in America revealed that slightly more than 43 percent of our names derive from places, followed by about 32 percent from patronymics, 15 percent from occupations, and 9 percent from nicknames.

In your genealogy research, you'll likely come across most of the four main categories of surnames:

Patronymics

Virtually every culture seemed to have some form of patronymic system, though some relied on it more heavily than others. In Ireland, the Scottish highlands, Wales and Spain the majority of names are patronymics; likewise in Scandinavia, though these have additional complications.

Occupational Names

Surnames derived from occupations figure prominently on the list of America's most common surnames, including Smith, Miller, Taylor, Clark, Walker, Wright, Baker, Carter, Stewart, Turner, Parker, Cook and Cooper.

(continued next column)

During the Middle Ages, it was useful to distinguish John the baker from John the tailor. The occupations were fairly common across Europe, and their use as surnames took on a decidedly local flavor.

Place Names

Surnames sprang from place names in several ways: when someone was associated with or living near or by a particular hill, brook, bush, dale, valley, island, bridge, meadow, road or village; when the person was known as coming from a particular locality; and when the individual owned a manor or village. Place-derived family names dominate in England and they're common in Germany and France.

Nicknames

The word "nickname" is derived from "an eke name," or added name. In a sense all surnames began as extra names, so technically speaking, all surnames are nicknames of one sort or another. In our classification scheme, hereditary family names based on nicknames often describe an ancestor's appearance (stature, hair, eyes, complexion, size), a characteristic or trait (strong, bold, brave), financial status, habits or special skills. Nickname-based names were popular in Italy and Portugal. Sometimes, this form was mixed with the patronymic system as in the Italian D'Onofrio, "son of a giant."

Often the lines blur between the categories. Take the example of Green. This name could come from one's clothing or given to one who was inexperienced. It could also mean a dweller near the village green, be a shortened form of a longer Jewish or German name, or be a translation from another language.

Specific ethnic groups often had their own naming conventions. In Russia, -vich is a common suffix, as in Ivan Nikolayevich (Ivan, son of Nikolay). In Nordic countries, -son or -sen indicates "son of." The suffix -dotter, -dottir or -datter means "daughter of." Gaelic patronymic surnames start with Mc, Mac, O or Fitz. (There's no factual basis to the belief Mac is Scottish and Mc is Irish — Mc is just an abbreviation of Mac.)

Some families have been in America so long, modern members don't have a clue where the name came from. How to unravel the tangle? In some cases, as with Cooper, Wright, Brook, MacKenzie and O'Connor, we can guess the meanings. For others, such as Samora, Deeming and Winton, the waters are muddier.

Barbara Krasner-Khait and Nancy Hedrickson - Family Tree Magazine Newsletter - 9 Jun 2026

Stay tuned for more Surname Research *in the next LINKS*

IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND A SEPARATE CHECK FOR <u>DUES ONLY</u> DIRECTLY TO OUR MEMBERSHP 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 2027

Membership Renewal of **$25.00 per household** is due December 31, 2026

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 <u>Membership</u> on your check memo space)

========== CUT ✂ HERE==========

Reservation for DEC 15, 2026, SBGS Luncheon at the Elks 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: Meatballs_____ Vegetarian: Egg Plant _____Lactose free: Meatballs_____

_____ A check for **$18** per meal is enclosed. If you don't use the reservation form, please note lunch choice on your check memo space.

Or 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 <u>RECEIVED</u> in the PO Box by <u>December 6</u>