PastFinder

Military records seminar

Military records can be among the most informative and authoritative sources of genealogy information. A November 9 seminar sponsored by the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy group is designed to help you make the most of military records.
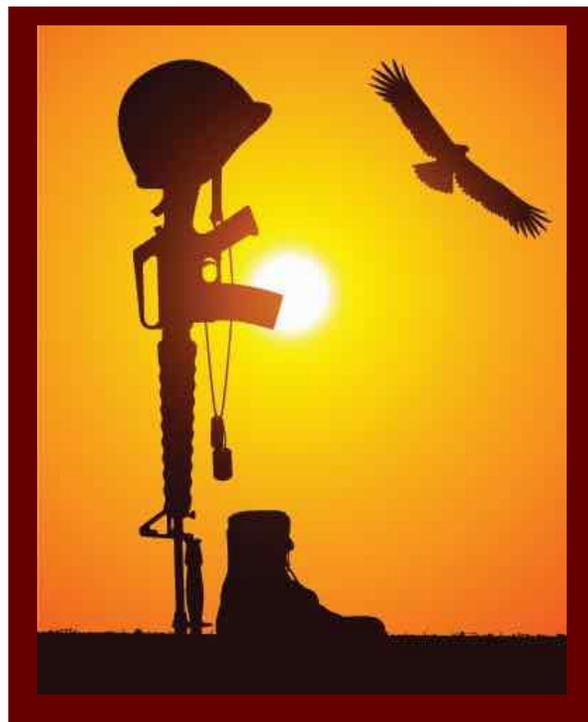
The all-day seminar, running from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., will be free and open to the public, as are all SVCGG seminars and meetings. A casebook syllabus will be available for purchase.

Keynote speaker will be Bryan McGraw, director, National Archives at St. Louis (National Personnel Records Center [NPRC]). He will address the historical and genealogical value of military records, as well as the status of the long-elusive World War I and II records, many of which were damaged by fire and water.

California genealogist Kathy Burrow will provide instruction in using Fold3.com, a popular records site owned by Ancestry.com. Records included at the seminar will be early Indian wars, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, Korean War, and Vietnam War, in addition to World Wars I and II.

An extensive and ambitious project is underway at the St. Louis facility to restore millions of military records damaged by fire and water in a 1973 fire. As this restoration continues, family historians are able to access some of these more recent records, which can provide information about the military service of parents and grandparents of current generations.

The seminar theme will be "Lest We Forget," drawn from the Rudyard Kipling poem "Recessional," which has become a popular hymn text not only in church settings, but also in military ceremonies. Its chorus phrase *Lest we forget* became associated with Armistice Day following World War I, in remembrance of members of the armed forces killed during that war. The hymn is sung to different tunes in different countries and denominations. Although the opening phrase often is changed to suit an occasion, the chorus *Lest we forget* remains standard, regardless of circumstance or the country whose war dead are honored.

Evidentia software: a review

By Lesly Klippel

A genealogical database without any sources is said to be nothing but hearsay, a collection of names, dates, places, and relationships that cannot be substantiated.

At a minimum, any sourcing is better than none. However, a serious researcher will provide a source for every item in a database, and every computer genealogy program provides some type of source template to assist in that endeavor. To publish your research in a genealogical publication, certain source standards must be met with footnotes and endnotes, meeting strict formatting requirements.

Elizabeth Shown Mills has explained those standards thoroughly in her book *Evidence Explained.* Evidentia software enables you to meet those high standards with your source material even if you do not plan to publish your research. This software also enables the user to determine whether he/she has met the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS; see page 3), the standard worked out by the Board for Certification of Genealogists, by which we can gauge the quality of research.

Evidentia has been reviewed thoroughly by several people in reviews that can be found by searching for *evidentia review* in a web search engine. Also, some videos explain how to use the program, based on webinars hosted by the Dear Myrtle website; they show the author entering data into the various Evidentia screens. The program is visually pleasing, with uncluttered screens and easily understood buttons and links.

The templates for entering the data comply with Ms. Mills' standards in *Evidence Explained.* The program supplies lots of tips and suggestions for helping you know what to enter into each field, with help provided as you hover a cursor over a field. After entering a source, you next enter a detailed citation with page number and other details. Next, you enter the "claims," which are the assertions made by the source. An example would be a death certificate

with the "claims" including such things as the date of death, the place of death, the marital status of the deceased, place of burial, and so forth.

The claims are classified as to their quality such as categories as direct, indirect, or negative, as well as primary, secondary, or indeterminable.
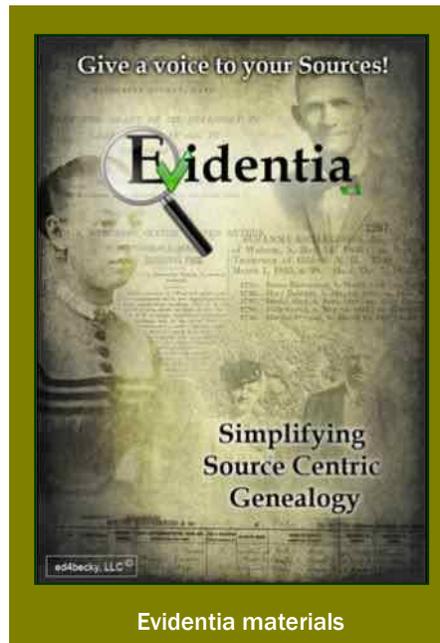
The next step is to analyze the evidence, which you do in a free-form field after looking at all the listed claims.

Finally, you write the Proof Summary in a free-form field. The program provides no helps for the wording of these two items, but the tutorials are instructive. The program than produces a proof report that conforms in style to Ms. Mills' standards.

A recent update to the program added the ability to import the name, birth year, and reference number of individuals from a GEDCOM file. No other information is imported, and you must use your program's source template to review the information about the sources that you wish to analyze.

Evidentia materials

The program would be most helpful when doing new research where you have a new source to analyze. It would be very tedious to analyze all your genealogy data in this program, as that would require you to find the sources you have used so that you can enter all the required data. If you have copies of your sources, as you should, the task would be much easier.

It would be a challenge to enter all your sources over again by hand—assuming that you entered them into your genealogy program in the first place. However, the program would be useful if you need to provide proof of a conclusion you have reached from your research. Using this program would also be a good exercise to improve the quality of your research and help you recognize areas where more research would increase the credibility of your data. Available for both PC and Mac, Evidentia can be purchased for $25 at www.evidentiasoftware.com, where a 30-day free trial is available.

The genealogical proof standard, explained

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to drive in a country where drivers licenses were not required? Or where there were no rules of the road? Or where no agency enforced the rules? The ensuing chaos would certainly be terrifying and life-threatening. Many aspects of our society have the need for licensing boards, craft guilds, or certification organizations that have the responsibility to establish standards within a specific field, principally to prevent chaos and to maintain a high level of competence among its practitioners.

For genealogy, the Board of Certification of Genealogists (BCG) has established itself as the watchdog of acceptable practices, and it maintains a program of certification testing to grant licenses to its members.

The letters after some genealogists' names, called "postnomials," such as *CG*, *CGL*, *CGI*, and others indicate that the BCG has scrutinized a portfolio of those individuals' work and given them the right to use the postnomials. The bible of BCG standards, *The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual*, was first published in 1964, followed by a Millennium Edition published in 2000.

One aspect of the 74 items listed as standards in the manual is what BCG calls the Genealogical Proof Standard, or GPS. The GPS is a five-step process to follow when attempting to establish the credibility of the information we gather about our ancestral lineage. To adhere to the GPS, one must (1) Conduct a reasonably exhaustive search in reliable sources; (2) include a complete and accurate citation to the source; (3) analyze and correlate the information to assess its quality as evidence; (4) resolve any conflicts; and (5) write a soundly reasoned, coherent conclusion.

Complete adherence to the five steps for every item of evidence in your family history would be excessively onerous. The proof standard is appropriately applied when the extant source information is vague or too insufficient to be credulous.

A good example might be when you are trying to establish the undocumented maiden name of an ancestor's wife. The five-step GPS would be one means to identify the most likely candidate. The BCG manual correctly states that the GPS does not ensure proof beyond the shadow of doubt, but until new evidence surfaces, it lends credibility to the conclusion.

One criticism of the GPS is that the notion of an "accurate citation" in step two has been interpreted by the BCG as using a very specific, complex methodology of citing sources without allowing for other citation techniques.

On the other hand, many genealogists believe that judging the validity of a genealogist's research should always allow for a variety of acceptable techniques.

Element of the GPS	Contribution to Credibility
Reasonably exhaustive search	• Assumes examination of a wide range of high quality sources • Minimizes the probability that undiscovered evidence will overturn a too-hasty conclusion
Complete and accurate citation of sources	• Demonstrates the extent of the search and the quality of the sources • Allows others to replicate the steps taken to reach the conclusion. (Inability to replicate the research casts doubt on the conclusion.)
Analysis and correlation of the collected information	• Facilitates sound interpretation of the data contributed by *each* source • Ensures that the conclusion reflects *all* the evidence
Resolution of conflicting evidence.	• Substantiates the conclusion's credibility. (If conflicting evidence is not resolved, a credible conclusion is not possible.)
Soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion.	• Eliminates the possibility that the conclusion is based on bias, preconception, or inadequate appreciation of the evidence • Explains how the evidence led to the conclusion

Proof standard details, from www.bcgcertification.org.

How I found it *Discoveries in an old column*

By Richard Rands

This month's column recounts a delightful discovery that caused me to sit back in my chair and ponder the amazing ways that information can come to light. I was working on the family of a Christoff Boje and his wife, Elvina Fritz, who had each immigrated to the United States from Germany and Prussia in the mid-19th century. My research had not uncovered their immigration details, so I was tracing each of their children in hopes of finding some clues that might help pinpoint when and where they immigrated.

The first two children were listed in Neosho county, Kansas, in the 1870 U.S. Census—Henry, age 4, and Mary, age 1, both born in Illinois. By the 1900 U.S. Census, Henry was married to a Georgiana, born in 1863 in Pennsylvania, they hadf a seven-year-old son named Henry, and were still living in Neosho county, Kansas, in the town of Centerville. Henry's 52-year-old mother, Elvina, now widowed, was living next door. Their surname, Boje, frequently is spelled in unusual ways and also is indexed in a variety of ways, but the close proximity of the family in Neosho county made it possible to identify the records in census images. I was able to follow Henry, Georgiana, and their family in census records every decade from 1900 to 1940. In the later census records, Georgiana began listing her name as Anna. Furthermore, sometime between 1900 and 1910 the family moved from Kansas to Marion County, Oregon. Henry died in Ashland, Oregon in 1941 and Anna died in Hubbard, Oregon, in 1950.
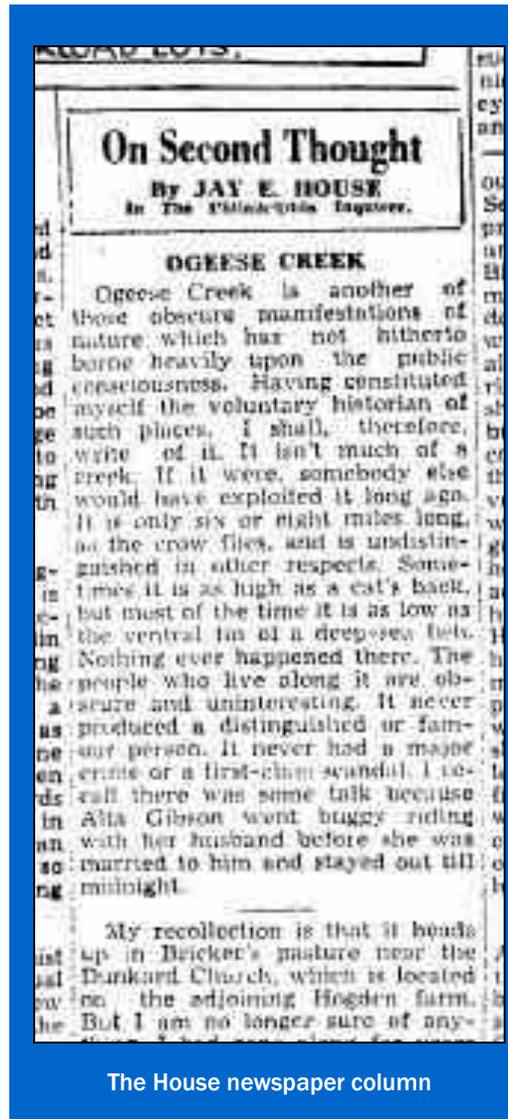
The paper trail in the census records was not difficult to trace, but nothing in the details offered any help in identifying immigration details for Henry's parents— my primary objective for following Henry's family.

The House newspaper column

Hoping to uncover an obituary that might contain some useful information, I turned to collections containing obituaries in Oregon, without success. Finally I determined to look in newspapers for Oregon covering the nearly 40 years the family resided there. Much to my surprise, when I ran a search for the Boje surname at NewspaperArchive.com in Oregon from 1910 to 1950 I found zero hits. How could a family live for 40 years in a place and never appear in the newspapers? I concluded that there must be something wrong with my search criteria and ran the search again, removing Oregon from the criteria, to search for the Boje surname elsewhere in the country.

This time the search resulted in several hundred hits. As is typical for a nationwide search, NewspaperArchive.com lists the states where hits are located. As I glanced at the list of states, I noticed that a significant number were from Kansas, where the Boje's had lived prior to 1910. Of course, it was prudent to glance through the Kansas hits, in case they contained references to Boje family members who might have remained in Kansas after Henry and his family moved to Oregon.

Many of the articles were difficult to decipher because of the poor computerized character recognition; the 30th hit was an article that included a reference to Henry Boje in the Hutchinson News for 21 June 1935. Hutchinson is in Reno County, Kansas, roughly 150 miles west of Neosho County, and 1935 is at least 25 years after Henry left Kansas. Nevertheless, the hit was an article mentioning a Henry Boje.

I opened the image of the newspaper page and enlarged the column containing the reference. To my astonishment, the article was a column written by a popular columnist of the day,

Whaddya think this is? Try the new *PastFinder* feature

We are adding a new feature to the *PastFinder* called "Whaddya think this is?" (*What do you think this is*, said fast). Each issue will include an item, fact, photo, or document that is significant for genealogical and family history research. You can guess the correct answer to the item, and the answer will be published near the back of the issue.

For example, if the item is the following photo:

You might see the following choices:

   A. Ellis Island, New York City

   B. Staten Island Ferry Building, New York City

   C. Castle Garden, New York City

   D. Grosse Island, Quebec

In this case, we hope you recognized this as a photo of C, the Castle Garden immigration station where foreign immigrants arriving at New York City between 1830 and 1891 were processed, prior to the opening of Ellis Island. When we publish the answer, we will usually include a website that will give you an opportunity to explore more information about the item.

What do you think this is?

So, for this issue, the very first WDYTTI, the item in question is an Act of the U.S. Congress passed on 2 July 1819, known as the Steerage Act. What do you think the significance of this act was for genealogy?

   A. Every ship arriving at a U.S. port had to steer its own way to the pier.

   B. Every ship arriving at a U.S. port had to supply

a manifest of all passengers to the port authorities.

   C. Ships would not be allowed into New York if they contained more than 2 passengers for every 5 tons of displacement.

   D. Immigration was limited to four U.S. ports: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and New Orleans.

For the answer, see page 8.

How I found it (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

Jay E. House, who wrote in a Garrison Keeler-type nostalgia format for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and whose column, "On Second Thought," was picked up by newspapers around the country. This particular column, titled "Ogeese Creek," began with recollections about a small stream from House's childhood, located in the town of Centerville, Neosho County, Kansas. My interest perked up!

In the second paragraph, Mr. House wrote, "My recollection is that it [Ogeese Creek] heads up in Bricker's pasture near the Dunkard Church…" After a brief description of Mr. Bricker, he added, "He didn't interest me; it was his daughter, Anna." What followed next was a delightful description of how he had met this pretty girl named Anna and had fallen hard for her, but she had not responded to his efforts to get a relationship going.

Mr. House concluded the paragraph with, "She did not reply to it in any way, and I never saw her again. A few years later she married Henry Boje and moved to Oregon."

What an incredible way to uncover the maiden name of Henry Boje's wife! A columnist writing in Philadelphia 25 years after the fact, whose column about a boyhood memory of what happened in a tiny village in eastern Kansas and was published in a newspaper in central Kansas, that mentions the name of a girl's father, who she married and where they moved.

What I got from it was a woman's maiden name, but it will be one of the most memorable discoveries I expect to ever have.

Adding photos to an online family tree, for free
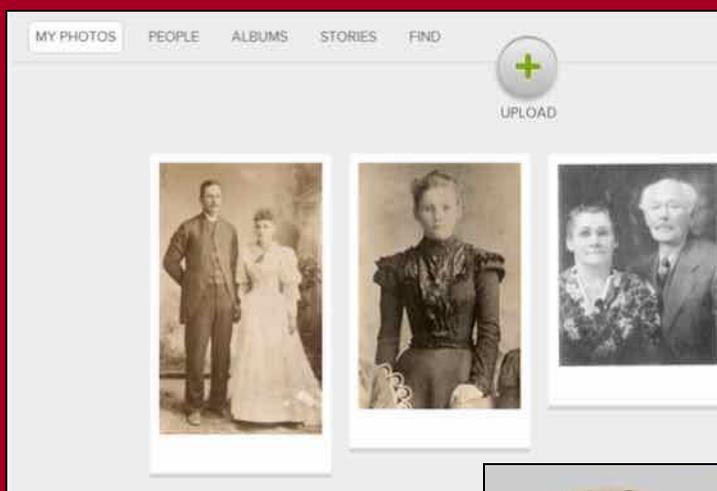
Uploaded images, at left, were digitally scanned from originals and uploaded to FamilySearch..org. Because they were tagged with identifying information, they were attached to individual records. Although the image below, beside the ancestor's name, was correctly identified, the system's cropping resulted in an odd illustration. You can prevent this by uploading portrait-style cropped images. Group images, such as the couple's wedding portrait at far left, will appear fine in the album view.

John Warren Brigham
22 March 1857 – 24 February 1940 · KZ7T-MBV
View Tree
Details   Photos ② Stories ⓪

FamilySearch.org has come up with yet another way for us to share our ancestry with our families. Although the site isn't the first to invite users to upload and share photographs and stories, it is free, and relatively easy — with some caveats.

First, create a free account at FamilySearch.org. Next, add digital images of the photos you want to upload. To add them to the site, just click on the Photos link in the digital carousel that comes up at FamilySearch.org (see inset above). To enter ancestors' information, use the Family Tree tab. To enter stories, use the Stories link in the Person view.

You then will be able to upload photos and information. If you've already entered information for a tree, and if you enter matching information about the photos, Family Tree should be able to match the photos with your tree. This feature didn't work when the process first went online, but it seems to be working consistently now.

Note, however, that the photo might not show up just as you want it (see above). The system seems to set a default cropping system that assumes every photo is a portrait of one individual. Since this often is not the case, this automated cropping of the area of the photo where one individual's head might normally be works sometimes, but often does not. The photos may appear fine in the album view, but may be oddly cropped in a Person view.

To prevent or resolve this, crop your photo images digitally before uploading them, so that each individual's image is cropped to a somewhat standard portrait proportion. You may need to experiment.

When you upload it, be sure to tag the photo with the name of the person in it, so that the system will know what photo belongs with what person.

Because FamilySearch Family Tree is an open system, others can add to your family information (a feature that has its good and its bad points). One benefit is that other users might upload photos of your ancestors that may be new to you. Similarly, your photos may be new to them.

Ask the doctor
Restoring PAF, new hard drive

Q **My PC hard drive failed shortly after FamilySearch removed the download link for Personal Ancestral File (PAF) from its website. I didn't have the installation files backed up, although I had backed up my PAF database. Is there still any way to download and install PAF? And how do I get everything working again?**

This is a great opportunity to modify a statement made in the last issue about sites that provide a downloadable copy of PAF5. It was suggested that sites such as CNET.com and Yahoo.com offered free downloads of PAF5, but upon closer examination, these sites require the download of a "download installer" before you can access the PAF5 installer, which brings with it a lot of unwanted software that may contain viruses and other malware. At this time we do not recommend using the commercial websites to download a copy of PAF5.

Old drive: gone but not forgotten

But do not despair. A veteran PAF5 programmer maintains his own website featuring a clean, free downloadable copy of the English version of the PAF5 (version 5.2.18) installation file. Lorin Lund says he plans to keep his site alive as long as he is alive. Users needing a fresh copy of the PAF5EnglishSetup.exe file can find it at www.ParowanSoftware.com. The link at www.svcgg.org will be switched to point to Lorin's site.

Another point — if you want to back up your entire computer, programs and all, you can do a "system backup" that copies your operating system files, your programs, and all of your documents, photos, music, etc. (what we call your "stuff"), onto a backup drive, like an external hard drive. These used to be fairly expensive, but these days you can find one as large as a terabyte for under $100. An online backup program such as Carbonite or Backblaze can create this backup for you automatically.

If you find that you need a new hard drive, a technician might be able to clone your new system from the system backup to the new hard drive. Assuming your configuration is not fraught with bugs and annoyances, this means your new hard drive will work like your old one, with the same desktop showing on your computer, same programs, same documents, etc. However, if your hard drive has picked up a fair amount of crud (viruses, corrupted files, other detritus of a hard-driven life) through years of usage, cloning it will merely perpetuate problems, so you would do better with a clean install of an operating system.

The Doctor's household recently experienced this situation. One of our desktop machines started threatening to crash (it told us this whenever we rebooted, which meant the crash was not within Windows, but was more potentially lethal). We preemptively took it in to a trusted shop for a new hard drive, first doing a complete system backup.

The technician replaced the hard drive and restored the system. Unfortunately, this computer had been out there digitally herding cattle and riding the range, so it was battered and beaten up. The copied system files had some glitches, so the computer came back to us with a new, larger hard drive and some programs reinstalled, others not.

One of the printers still won't work with the redone computer, and the network is fussy. The monitor was challenging to reconnect to the computer (it also has problems, apparently), and it took nearly everyone in the household pushing touch-buttons on it to get it working again, we do not know how. If we'd let the cat join in and chew on the cables, it might have connected sooner, but we could debate that for a long time. Whatever.

We had to track down various installation files and installation disks, as well as product keys (those long alphanumeric strings you have to enter when you buy certain software programs from companies such as Microsoft, Adobe, and genealogy software vendors).

What didja think it was? And were ya right?

ANSWER to question posed on page 5: B. The Steerage Act of 1819, which took effect on 1 January 1820 required lists of all passengers to be filed with the port authorities of all U.S. seaports of entry.

Consequently, many of our immigrant ancestors entering the U.S. from January 1820 on can be located in official passenger records. The New York passenger list are currently being re-indexed by the same team who worked on the 1940 Census Indexing project earlier this year. For more information about the act, go to: http://salempress.com/store/samples/american_immigration/american_immigration_history.htm

Ask the Doctor (continued)

For this reason, it makes sense to keep a folder of the product keys and download files someplace safe. Aside from that, it is a matter of deciding whether some programs are worth upgrading or reinstalling. We all tend to collect extraneous programs, so this might be a good time for spring-cleaning your computer, regardless of the actual season.

If your biggest concern is how to reinstall PAF, consider yourself fortunate. For many people, the looming issue is lost files on a dead or dying hard drive.

If you have been diligent about backing up, you can take comfort, without being smug. As author William Goldman wrote in the immortal *The Princess Bride*, "Life isn't fair, it's just fairer than death, that's all."

Goldman must know computers.

Upcoming meetings

The group meets monthly except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 to 11 A.M. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California (see map at right). The group is not affiliated with any church or other group.

10 August 2013, 9–11 A.M.
- The world of immigration records (Richard Rands)
- Data storage/backup (Morris Jones)
- Reunion 10 for Mac (Pat Burrow)
- Reunion 10 for Mac Basics (Debbie Callan)
- Research help (Pam Brigham)
- Getting started in genealogy, with Q&A (Carleen Foster)

14 September 2013, 9–11 A.M.
- Getting acquainted with the new old FamilySearc.org, (Pam Brigham)
- Software to synchronize and back up your data *or* Plan B (Richard Rands)
- Research with Lesly (Lesly Klippel)
- Reunion 10 for Mac (Pat Burrow)
- Reunion for Mac Basics (Pat Solomon)
- Getting started in genealogy with Q&A (Carleen Foster)

Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVCGG is the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, a nonprofit group of some 600 genealogy enthusiasts. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVCGG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family historians improve their skills in using technology for genealogy research.

PastFinder is published monthly except December. It is distributed at meetings to members and mailed to others after the meetings. Members can receive the newsletter digitally by emailed link.