PastFinder

SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

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Research logs—breadcrumbs

When Hansel and Gretel headed into the forest they left a trail of breadcrumbs so they could find their way back home.

These days, breadcrumbs are little navigational tools that help users of computerized devices see where they are within a program or a computer file structure, functioning like a little roadmap.

Genealogically speaking, breadcrumbs can be compared to research logs, those documents we ought to fill out as we conduct our research. Too often, we pave our research roads with good intentions rather than detailed logs.

Traditionally, a research log has been a way to keep track of what sources you have already searched and what sources you plan to search. As explained in the FamilySearch.org research wiki:

"Good research logs help you—

- "Cite your sources. This shows quality research.
- "Sort out what has and has not been found.
- "Organize and correlate copies of documents.
- "Weigh evidence to make better conclusions, and better lineage links.
- "Show your search strategies and questions.
- "Reduce unwanted duplication of effort."

Those reasons for keeping a research log remain valid. It is a valuable record—a trail of breadcrumbs, so to speak—of where you have been and where you plan to go.

A new function for the research log is emerging, however, as genealogically rich information has proliferated on the Web: A research log is a reminder of where to search again. Just because you didn't find records in your most recent search does not mean they still aren't available.

A case in point occurred some months ago. A telephone call came to the home of a Family History (FamilySearch) Center director. The caller indicated a need to search a collection of Hindu pilgrimage records that were available in microfiche format for order and could be used only at a local Family History Center. The caller wondered if it would be possible to take the fiche offsite for use.

In the several days since the caller had accessed the listing of the records on FamilySearch, but had not yet ordered them, the records had become available for free viewing online. Covering the years 1194 to 2012, the records now were accessible to anyone with a FamilySearch login. (Which, as we know, means anyone who signs up.)

The same phenomenon is true of many searchable sites. Cemetery listings that did not exist one week might be available the next week. Nearly all

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Research log *(continued)*

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services, from Interment.net to Ancestry.com, are adding records continually.

For instance, on 26 September 2013 FamilySearch made this announcement: "FamilySearch Adds More Than 192 Million Indexed Records and Images to Collections from Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Spain, Switzerland, the United States, and Wales." A quick look at the list of new records showed that all of the indexed records were from the United States, with hundreds of thousands of unindexed records now available from South America. As those records are indexed, the additional information provided by indexing will be available.

This phenomenon adds an additional purpose to the research log. Not only should you avoid unnecessary duplicate searching, but you should return to resources that are continually updated.

Keeping a research log is relatively easy within database software. For example, RootsMagic allows the user to build and maintain a research log through its Lists pull-down menu, or through a clickable Research Log button in the Edit Person screen.

Legacy Family Tree software has a Research Guidance/To-Do/Research Log cluster of functions that enable the user to keep track of what research has been conducted and what remains to be done.

Ancestral Quest's latest release has a Research Timeline, in addition to earlier usability enhancements including To-Do lists, Research Manger, and Log.

Even if your favorite genealogy software doesn't yet have a dedicated research log, you can use the Notes feature to keep track of research progress on your more elusive ancestors.

You also can use a paper research log by downloading and printing the PDF at familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/images/5/50/Research_Log.pdf

A common question is whether it is necessary to keep a research log for each ancestor in your database. That certainly is an option, particularly if you have a limited database. You might find it more feasible to keep research logs about the ancestors you are researching currently, those who are direct-line ancestors, or those who present the greatest research challenges. For other ancestors, source documentation may be adequate.

You can start a paper research log by entering the ancestor's name and listing research objectives, or what you hope to find through your research, such as a marriage date, a female ancestor's maiden name, or a birth date. As you launch the research inquiry, you can list the sources you try, with such specifics as film numbers, URLs, names of local repositories, the dates of your searches, and the results of your search. If you scan, photograph, photocopy, or handwrite the results, include that notation in the research log.

Your goal is not only to avoid searching a static resource more than once inadvertently, but also to leave breadcrumbs back to resources that are continually being updated and increased.

Transfer new information to your database. Write your findings in a research log, noting what you found and didn't find. This will help you decide when, and if, to search those resources again, particularly if the resources are being updated.

Another alternative is to keep your research log in the Cloud by using software such as Research Ties web-based software. The program, which has a free trial period, costs $30/year. It comes with a Learning Center and a learning curve. The software can seem a bit awkward to navigate, and at times buggy, but the Provo, Utah, developers are responsive to feedback and are continually improving the product.

Uploading a GEDCOM to ResearchTies is easy. Exporting the GEDCOM from a database with good documentation and informative notation will help you make the most of ResearchTies or another online solution. For this reason, the initial step is, yet again, to build a solid, comprehensive database before you export the information to another program.

A thorough research log can become an informative part of a well-organized database that forms the core of an effective, efficient research effort.

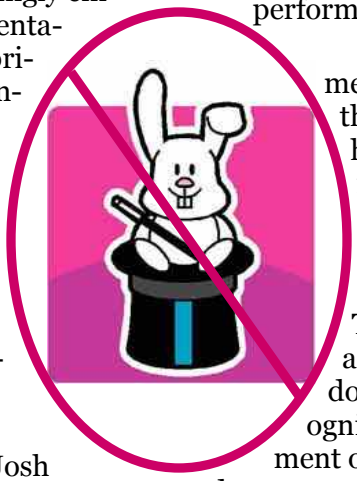
Review: *Genealogy Roadshow*

By Janet Brigham

I like a white bunny as well as the next person. I've never pulled one out of a hat—or even seen that done live—but I've seen so-called magic tricks on TV. And now that I've watched the first three episodes of *Genealogy Roadshow*, I've seen a bunch more rabbits pulled from a bunch more hats.

Perhaps my hopes and expectations have been too high for pop-culture genealogy. I know what it's like to have family members get excited about running across some unsubstantiated document online that purportedly shows our 12th or 13th century ancestry. It's as easy as pie for them to decide it's a "breakthrough," but I have learned to be polite as I shrug off the far-too-easy answers.

The evolution of the TV series *Who Do You Think You Are?* (from which we unashamedly adapted our column *Whaddya think this is?*) increasingly emphasizes reliance on sources and documentation. Episodes tend to end with the celebrity subject contemplating and grasping ancestors' lives with increased awareness and appreciation. These days, the TLC-reincarnated show includes more documentation (even if some of it is beyond what most of us could access), so that we recognize the familiar process of genealogy searching. Although most of us can't draw on the resources of expert living historians and archivists, we know how to recognize genealogical proof.



We assume that *Roadshow* co-hosts Josh Taylor and Kenyatta Berry—both attractive, youngish genealogy rock stars—know better than to leap to unwarranted conclusions. We know that an hour of filming might be condensed to just a few minutes of screen time. We assume the co-hosts are familiar with the aphorism *Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence*. We assume that they are familiar with the concept *preponderance of evidence*. We assume they are not actors playing genealogists playing magicians.

Yet what we have seen in the first three installments of this new series is a proliferation of the phrase "We know that…" followed by statements offered without substantiation. We have seen purported evidence such as "a letter" without mention of who wrote it, or when, or where it's housed.

The show consists of brief discussions of genealogical issues and too-brief displays of genealogical conclusions. Afterward, a co-host announces that, for example, the visitor to the *Roadshow* does have Revolutionary War ancestors, or can claim Benjamin Franklin as a first-cousin many times removed, or has a famous explorer for an ancestor. Sometimes we see snippets from a census, a pension file, or a city directory—occasionally identified as such, often not. Sometimes we see a brief clip from a local expert (perhaps identified as "Professor Emeriti," misapplying the plural of *Emeritus*, even though the individuals are shown one at a time. Let's suggest that, among other changes, the show's producers hire a caption copyeditor and ditch the post-disclosure interviews.)

Once the genealogical verdict is declared, the gathering of Roadshow visitors applauds, sometimes tearfully, rather like the applause following a parlor performance. Or an intimate magic show.

What have we learned during the segments? Not enough. We have not learned that real-life research takes many person-hours (would it take long to say how many, in *Roadshow* or in *WDYTYA?*?) We have not learned how to interpret sources, or how to draw reasonable conclusions.

Those of us dedicated to good genealogy are heartened by source documents. We do not find them boring, although we recognize that others might. I recall that moment of discovery when I first found a useful document —it was akin to the first time I tasted crème brulée and wondered, "Is this what I missed by growing up in rural Idaho? I could've been eating this incredible stuff all my life!" Well, perhaps not in rural Idaho, where they have more Bunsen burners than kitchen torches.

We know that the genealogists doing the behind-the-scenes work in *Roadshow* probably are smart and probably have enough resources to search beyond a basic, wiggly Ancestry.com leaf. So when the unedited footage reaches production, would it hurt to reprioritize the content to spend more time on fewer segments, so that the viewing public can see a bit of how researchers learn what they learn?

Would it hurt to be more like *Dancing with the Stars* than like the old standard *Queen for a Day*? In *DWTS*, the nondancers (often of dubious celebri-

(Continued on page 4)

How I found it Tracking generations

By Richard D. Rands

In the course of trying to solve a complex family history problem based on limited information and plenty of family lore, some intriguing aspects of the circumstances became clear as I pursued each family member's descendants over time. This installment of "How I Found It" is another testimony that the effectiveness of coupling a systematic analysis of census records with interim records often will lead to important discoveries.

This is the story of Grandma Lucas, who, according to family lore, had "many children borne by M. Lucas, and among them there was a pair of twins." Family records claim that one of Grandma's daughters, Vida Idell Harper, married George Addison Gray in El Dorado County, California. George was born about 1845.

From the beginning, since Grandma Lucas apparently had a daughter who was married using the maiden name Harper, rather than Lucas, there is a strong likelihood that Grandma was married to a Harper prior to being married to M. Lucas. In fact, family lore says that she had two children who carried the Harper surname, Vida and Charles. Consequently, part of the project was to determine Grandma's maiden name, her name before she married Mr. Harper, and to identify Mr. Harper.

Geo A Gray, "California, County Marriages, 1850-1952"

Name:	Geo A Gray
Event Type:	Marriage
Event Date:	30 May 1872
Event Place:	El Dorado, California, United States
Gender:	Male
Age:	26
Birth Year (Estimated):	1846
Father's Name:	
Mother's Name:	
Spouse's Name:	Vita Idell Harper
Spouse's Age:	20
Spouse's Gender:	Female
Spouse's Birth Year (Estimated):	1852
Spouse's Father's Name:	
Spouse's Mother's Name:	
Page:	503
GS Film number:	1293610
Digital Folder Number:	004540633
Image Number:	00468

FamilySearch.org image

A good starting point for this project was to locate a marriage record in El Dorado County for Vida Idell Harper and George Addison Gray. If such a record turned up, it should reveal a time frame, and perhaps Vida Idell's father's name (he should be a Harper) and her mother's name, perhaps even her mother's maiden name.

A search of the index for California County Marriages, 1850-1952, uncovered a marriage in El Dorado County between Geo A Gray, age 26, and Vita Idell Harper, age 20, on 30 May 1872. No image of

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Review: *Genealogy Roadshow (continued)*

(Continued from page 3)

ty) are assigned to work with professional dancers who train them through grueling weeks of tears and torn ligaments. Eventually the nondancers get the rhumba or the paso doble down well enough to perform it, even if they declare their lack of readiness as they go onto the dance floor. The glamour of the production is complemented by clips of the grim rehearsals, with falls, stumbles, and memory lapses.

A corollary on *Roadshow* would be to show how the pedigree-building process is based on documents and findings, with a few false starts and course corrections.

The parallel to the engaging and long-lived *Antiques Roadshow* has been too closely applied. Someone who hauls in an antique chair of unknown provenance can draw on the encyclopedic knowledge of experts. But Chippendale furniture is not a family story. Someone who comes to *Genealogy Roadshow* with a family story cannot simply rely on an expert in family tales. Each tale requires unique research. Family historians must become experts in using a variety of tools and must learn to evaluate the quality of information they find.

Roadshow has an opportunity to teach regular folk about the fascinating histories of other regular folk. That they have not followed the *WDYTYA?* celebrities-only model is admirable. That they are modeled too closely after *Antiques Roadshow* is problematic. If, however, they show fewer segments and cover them in more detail, they can become a respected, valued player in the further popularization of genealogy as a healthy addiction. We welcome that.

How I found it (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

the record was available, and unfortunately the index didn't indicate parents' names. At least it provided the time period.

Seeing a marriage in 1872 suggested starting a census analysis beginning with the 1880 U.S. Census, most likely in California. In 1880, George and Vita were living in Rocklin, California, with three children, Charles, age 7, Frederick, age 5, and Archibald, age 2. Twenty years later, in 1900, the couple was living in nearby Sacramento, with children George, age 25, Willie, age 21, Florence, age 19, Effa, age 13, and Frank, age 9, all born in California. It appeared that Frederick was then going by *George*, Archibald was going by *Willie*, and the eldest son, Charles, who would have been 27 years old, had left the household. The census record indicated that Vita had given birth to six children, and all six were still alive. All of her children were accounted for in the 1880 and 1900 U.S. census records.

So far so good.

Moving on, and based on the fact that the census records so far for Vita Idell (Harper) Gray indicated that she was born in Virginia (or West Virginia) about 1852, we had sufficient detail to begin searching for Grandma Lucas. We looked in the 1860 U.S. Census for Vita Idell Harper, born about 1852 in Virginia. Neither FamilySearch.org nor Ancestry.com census indexing found a Vita or Idell Harper in the 1860 U.S. Census, filtering for one born in Virginia between 1850 and 1854. However, Ancestry.com returned a record for an Idel Lucas born about 1852 in Virginia, residing in Nebraska City, Otoe County, Nebraska Territory, in 1880. A look at the 1860 U.S. Census image showed the following family:

Manora Lucas	26	Kentucky
Mary Lucas	23	Delaware
Idel Lucas	8	Virginia
Charles Lucas	5	Iowa
Harriet Lucas	2	Iowa

This record had the only Idel that fit her description, plus a sibling named Charles, and the father named Manora. These combined facts put this record at the top of possibilities. In the U.S. and International Marriage Record Index, 1560-1900, was a record for the marriage of Manoah Lucas and Mary Harper in 1851 in Nebraska.

Continuing the census analysis for this Lucas family, we discovered that by 1870 they had moved to Amador County, California, where Manoah had taken up mining, and the family had grown to eight children, including a pair of twins, Edward and Irvin, age 3.

This corresponds to family lore that Grandma Lucas had twins. The 1880 U.S. Census put them in nearby Placer County, part of the California gold country of that time.

All this was progressing well! At least, until we got to the 1900 U.S. Census. Manoah and Mary Lucas, with any variation of their names, were nowhere to be found in the 1900 census. Period. In 1892, Manoah appeared in the California Voter Registers living in Placer County. Then he appeared in the California Death Index, having died in Sacramento County on 1 Aug 1895, and Mary appeared in the same record collection, having died 4 Mar 1929. But why didn't Mary show up in the 1900 U.S. Census? By this time we had learned that her middle initial was *F*.

Genealogy research methodology teaches that a

(Continued on page 6)

Whaddya think this is?

We continue here a new feature to the *PastFinder,* "Whaddya think this is?". Each issue now includes an item, fact, photo, or document that is significant for genealogical and family history research. The correct answer will be published near the back of the issue.

So, whaddya think this is?

A. A vintage mechanical tachometer
B. An ancient star pointer
C. A nineteenth century wart remover
D. A drill-hole depth measurement device

(For the correct answer, see page 8.)

widow who cannot be found on her own might be residing at the home of one of her married children. That meant continuing the census analysis for each of Mary's eight children, beginning with Idel (who probably was listed as Vita Idell Gray) all the way down to the twins, Edward and Irvin.

Although this search was time-consuming in the case of the Lucas children, most of them appeared in California marriage records, census records, and other listings, giving a fairly consistent trail of information, except that Grandma Lucas was not listed among any of the families until the 1910 census, when she was living with daughter Harriet, who was then married to Bernard Joesink, a retired railroad engineer living in Sutter, California. In 1920, Grandma was listed as living with her son (a twin) Irvin, in Roseville, California. But where was she in 1900?

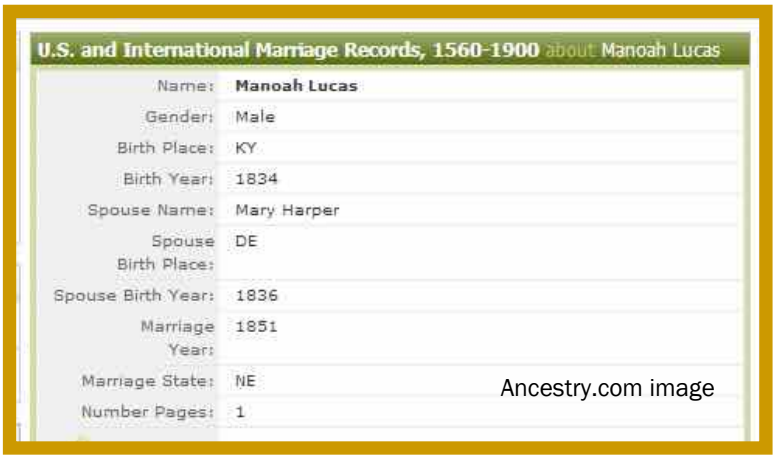
Back to George and Vita Gray: The family unit does not appear for George Gray in the 1910 U.S. Census, but there was an entry for Vita Gray, a widow, in a household including only two of her children, Effie and Frank. In addition, Effie was married, and her husband, Edwin Haffey, was included with the family as a son-in-law. At the bottom of the listing was an adopted daughter, Inez F. Schafer, age 13.

A California Death Index record indicated that a George A Gray died at age 64 in Sacramento County on 3 Dec 1909. The four oldest children in the family were certainly old enough to be gone from the household by 1910. So far all of the details seemed to be on solid footing.

A curious subplot in Grandma Lucas's family history comes to light in the records for her daughter Mary B., who was born just before the twins. In October 1888, Mary B. married George W. Schaffer in Placer County. By 1900, George and Mary appeared in the U.S. Census with four children, Bernard, age 7, Lutas, age 5, Inez, age 3, and Clifton, age 1. To my surprise, included in the list of family members was a Mary F. Lucas, sister-in-law, age 30, single, born in Delaware — a single woman, sister-in-law to George, born five years after Mary B., in Delaware, long after the family had moved to California simply did not fit, and it was a huge stretch to turn this person into Grandma Lucas, who would have been a 64-year-old widow, and who would've been listed as George's mother-in-law in the 1900 U.S. Census.

Curious, indeed!

Even more curious was the fact that George and Mary B. Shaffer did not seem to appear in the 1910 U.S. Census. After hours of serious searching, I found a record in the California Death Index for a Mary B. Schaffer who died on 6 Jul 1905 in Sacramento County with the correct age that Mary B. (Lucas) Schaffer would have been in 1905. On the assumption that Mary B. Shaffer was the mother of Bernard, Lutas, Inez, and Clifton I wondered what happened to the family by 1910?



U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900 about Manoah Lucas

Name:	Manoah Lucas
Gender:	Male
Birth Place:	KY
Birth Year:	1834
Spouse Name:	Mary Harper
Spouse Birth Place:	DE
Spouse Birth Year:	1836
Marriage Year:	1851
Marriage State:	NE
Number Pages:	1

Ancestry.com image

Part of the answer was found by reviewing the census analysis worksheets of the other family members. As shown previously, included in the 1910 U.S. Census for Vita Idell Gray was an adopted daughter named Inez Schafer, who was 13 years old. She easily corresponded to the 3-year-old daughter of George and Mary B. Schaffer in the 1900 U.S. Census.

Vita Idell must have adopted her sister's daughter, Inez, when the sister died. This can be further corroborated by looking at the 1910 census listing for the twin son, Irvin, who, with his wife, Annie, has an 11-year-old son named Clifton S. Lucas. In the 1900 U.S. Census, George and Mary B. Schaffer had a one-year-old son named Clifton.

Apparently, Mary B.'s brother adopted her youngest child at Mary B.'s death. I have yet to locate where Bernard and Lutas (probably *Lucas*) were adopted, but the search goes on. George W. Schaffer, who was a railroad conductor, was nowhere to be found. A search of newspapers turned up nothing about a family tragedy. Perhaps George's occupation made it difficult to handle four young children, so he spread them among the family and moved on.

Ask the Doctor What to do with my database?

Q I have questions about how to back up and store photos, documents, and letters.

I have an online backup service, external hard drive, flash drives (which are supposed to last only a few years), and access to 20 GB free Cloud storage. I haven't used my database (RootsMagic) much yet, although I updated to RootsMagic 6. I need a place to keep pedigree and family group data online where other people can't change it.

I am still trying to send my cousins the research I've done. This family history is never finished, but I want to get my information to them.

The Doctor is thrilled to have an invitation to expound once again on the virtues of maintaining your own database *and* sharing your information with others.

Where to plant it?

What to do with a database

We do understand that not everyone who wants to engage in genealogy research has a computer or a tablet in the house, or even has access to communal computers at libraries and Family History (aka FamilySearch) Centers. For the moment, let's assume that you do have a computing device (desktop, laptop, tablet) onto which you can load software. If not, remember that Family History Centers usually have genealogy software available for free use on the center's computers.

The genealogy community is fortunate to have an array of excellent database software options. The way to take advantage of this is to use your database as the central organizing feature of your research. Build a database (with you as the root person) and use it to organize all your research. Attach scanned images and documents. Use the Notes and Sources features to tell ancestors' stories and document facts about their lives.

If you use your database to full advantage, you do not need an additional organizing structure. Since you'll probably want to save some hard-copy documents and original photos/slides, you can create a simple file cabinet filing system (e.g., file 0001, 0002, etc.) that's noted in your database source information.

It is good that you use multiple ways to back up your computer, particularly since external hard drives can crash irretrievably. Flash drives are vulnerable to failure as well, if they have been rewritten extensively or damaged. As for the Cloud storage, perhaps it will provide a convenient way to store files you are currently working with, so you can retrieve them easily elsewhere.

Sharing your information

You'll probably find that few of your relatives (cousins, nephews and nieces, etc.) will know what to do with a full copy of your database, even if you provide it to them as a GEDCOM that they can import into nearly any genealogy software. Most of them will not have database software and will not be interested in doing more than browsing and reading what you have written. Sending family members CDs and DVDs with so-called "scrapbook" software to display family photos has been another way to share.

The limitations of these approaches are why family historians now share written versions of their researched information through creating family websites, blogging, posting family trees online, and printing books of histories and photos.

With online trees now so easy to create and post, they have become a popular way to share information. Several websites offer tree-creation options and web space, free or paid. Consider TribalPages.com, or if you have an Ancestry.com account, build trees at Ancestry. Consider uploading a GEDCOM to RootsWeb.org, or try a free basic subscription to Geni.com or MyHeritage.com. Most tree and website software does not require that you enter all of your genealogy information by hand, but accepts uploaded GEDCOM files. FamilySearch.org Family Tree does not have a simple way to populate a free family tree with a GEDCOM; it also allows other users to make changes that affect your tree.

What didja think it was? And were ya right?

ANSWER to question posed on page 5: A. A vintage mechanical tachometer.

This unusual looking device was discovered in a large storage unit that held much of the belongings of Janet Brigham's late parents.

It was uncovered while the Brighams' daughters were searching their parents' belongings for genealogically meaningful material that might be buried among the boxes of old papers and relics.

Janet's father, Morton Brigham, was a civil engineer who worked in the wood products industry in the Pacific Northwest. He was often called upon to troubleshoot problems with sawmills and other manufacturing plants.

A possible problem at a mill would be a saw blade or other machinery that was not rotating at the correct speed. This mechanical tachometer allowed Morton to touch rotating parts of the equipment with the rubber-tipped pointer end of the tachometer. As the rubber tip rotated with the equipment, it caused the graduated dials on the tachometer to turn.

Using a stopwatch allowed the engineer to count the rotations for one minute. The dials on the device registered the exact rpm (revolutions per minute) and make it possible to determine whether or not mill equipment was operating correctly.

This particular device was manufactured by the L. S Starrett Co. of Athol, Massachusetts, sometime after 1909.

The tachometer was found in a waxed canvas field bag, along with another Starrett measurement device and a mechanical counter. The two daughters had never before seen the items, which probably were too important to Morton's work for him to let his children use as toys.

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.

12 October 2013, 9–11 A.M.

- Navigating the new old FamilySearch.org, Part 2 (Pamela Brigham)
- Mobile GEDCOM viewers for Apple and Android (Janet Brigham)
- Research with Richard (Richard Rands)
- Get started, Q&A (Carleen Foster)

9 November 2013, 9 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Military records seminar, Lest We Forget, free and open to the public. Learn how to access and interpret military records.

December 2013, No meeting

PastFinder

First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013
First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012
National Genealogical Society

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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.