

MARIN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January 2016



Mailing Address: Post Office Box 1511, Novato, CA 94948-1511
Meetings: LDS Church, 220 North San Pedro Rd, San Rafael
Email Contact: research@maringensoc.org
Email discussion list: maringensoc@rootsweb.com
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MCGS Website: <http://www.maringensoc.org>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2015

Jan 14: DNA Group Meeting 7:00 pm
Jan 20: Writing Group Meeting 1:00 pm
Jan 27: General Meeting 7:00 pm
Feb 6: MCGS Breakfast, Star, 9:00 am

DNA Group Meeting Thursday, Jan 14, 2016
LDS Church, San Rafael
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
“Hands-On Learning Experience”
Presented by Vernon Smith
Bring your laptop or tablet and learn
how to download your raw data
and upload it to FTDNA or GEDmatch
More information on the [DNA Group Page](#)

Writing Group Meeting Jan 20, 2016, 1:00 - 3:00 pm
Bring any writing done during the holidays and share it.
For more details, contact
[Susan Trumbull](#) (415-897-1617) or [Shirley Hudson](#)

Saturday Breakfast, Feb 6, 2015, at 9:00 am
MCGS members and all beginners are invited
for breakfast on a Saturday each month at Star Restaurant, 1700 Novato Blvd in Novato at 9:00 am.

Napa Valley Genealogical Society Library
Field Trip, Thursday, February 11, 2016

General Meeting Format Change:

The first hour of our meeting will include an opportunity to share some examples of written family histories. Do you have a book or other written item you'd like to share with the group? Please bring it. We will go around the room so everyone can describe their item briefly. This sharing session will be followed by refreshments and socializing time.

MCGS General Meeting, Jan 27, 2016, at 7:00pm “Writing Your Family History”

Presented by Heidi Lyss

As genealogists we spend much time collecting family information and organizing it into trees and notes. In this seminar we will discuss how you can enhance the sharing of your research via writing narrative family stories or histories. These may be about your relatives and/or about your own experiences, and may be as short as one paragraph, or as long as a book.

We will consider how to choose whom to write about, identify your audience, deal with research, research/information gaps, include photos and documents, and structure your work. We will also look at several examples of family histories and briefly touch on considerations for sharing your work in print and electronically.

Heidi Lyss has an MFA in Creative Writing and teaches writing workshops for Sierra College Community Education. She has received awards for two short stories. Her published pieces also include creative non-fiction and poetry.

Upcoming Events

Napa Valley Genealogical Society (NVGS)
Thursday, Jan 21, 2016, 1:30 pm.
“Using FamilySearch.org”
Presented by Mary Herzog.
NVGS Library, 1701 Menlo Ave., Napa, CA
[Info here](#)

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California Genealogical Society
Saturday, Jan 30, 2016, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.
“French-Canadian Family History”
Presented by Robert Jackson

The key problem facing anyone with French-Canadian ancestors is to discover their most recent marriage record, whether in Canada or the United States, which will usually provide access to the rest of the family tree.

2201 Broadway, Suite LL2
Oakland, CA 94612
[Register here](#)

Documenting the Vilna Ghetto Library

A presentation by Judy Baston

Sunday, Jan 31, 2016, 1:30 pm

Jewish Community Library

1835 Ellis Street

San Francisco, CA 94115

California Genealogical Society
Saturday, Feb 27, 2016, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.
“Discovering Your German Roots: The Great Migration 1815-1914” Presented by Robert Jackson

The challenge is to discover the hometown of your German ancestors, even if they arrived 150 years ago. With that you can build a family tree using original sources.

2201 Broadway, Suite LL2
Oakland, CA 94612
[Register here](#)

Sonoma County Genealogical Society
Saturday, April 16, 2015, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.
24th Annual Spring Seminar
Judy G.Russell, “The Legal Genealogist”
Finley Community Center
2060 West College Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA
[Info](#)

Blog Spot

Randy Seaver discusses [“WikiTree Provides More DNA Information About Relatives”](#) and [“Top 40 Most Popular Posts on Genea-Musings In 2015”](#)

Judy Russell discusses [“The milestones: Looking back to 2015, forward to 2016”](#)

Roberta Estes reveals [“The Best and Worst of 2015 – Genetic Genealogy Year in Review”](#) and [“We Match...But Are We Related?”](#)

Family Tree magazine offers [“25 Best Genealogy Websites for Beginners”](#)

Jim Bartlett explains about Common Ancestors in [“CA and MRCA”](#)

Diahan Southard presents [“DNA Circles – Here’s when they DON’T mean connections on AncestryDNA”](#)

Maurice Gleeson discusses [“Genetic Distance, Genetic Families, & Mutation History Trees”](#).

Lara Diamond presents [“My Endogamous Father”](#)

MCGS Officers for 2015 - 16

President - Sierra Pope

1st VP & Programs - Susan Trumbull

2nd VP - Vernon Smith - (Newsletter)

Secretary - Sandy Smith

Treasurer - Conn Rusche

Registrars - Joanne Rowlands & Pam McCart

Jim Robinson (Past President)

Sonja Jensen - (LDS Liaison)

Directors:

Phyllis Garratt (Consultant)

Erin Lacey - (Publicity)

Shirley Hudson - (Hospitality)

Carolyn Hacker (At Large)

Committee chairpersons

MCGS Library - Jo Ann Rowley-Minhoto & Drusilla Miller

Field Trips - Will Deady

Sales - Paul & Carolyn Hacker

Research - Cathy Gowdy

Web Site - Heinz Scheuenstuhl

Family History Center and the Genealogical Society Library

Located at the LDS Church,
220 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael

Phone: (415) 479-2793

Wed. & Fri 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Tuesday 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Thurs 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Closed: Sunday, Monday, and Saturday

Meet the Member - Erin Lacey Field



I was born in 1974 in La Jolla, California. My parents later settled in Vista, north of San Diego, when my father took a teaching position there in the early 1970s. This meant we were just a 20-minute drive from my paternal grandparents, who still lived on the ranch where my father was raised in Fallbrook, and a 2-hour drive from my maternal grandparents, who lived in my mother's hometown of San Marino, near Los Angeles. Growing up, I saw my grandparents often. Holidays meant big family gatherings and being surrounded by cousins, aunts and uncles.

When I was a child, my father, a teacher, had summers off work. In 1982, my parents bought a camping trailer, packed my two younger brothers and me into our car, and set off for a 6-week road trip across the USA. This was the first of many such lengthy trips, and gave my brothers and me an invaluable education in the history and culture of our country. While Gettysburg and Mt. Vernon were for my friends just paragraphs in a history book, for me they were real places that I'd visited and experienced in a meaningful way. These years of travel helped me develop a passion for history that would later propel me into the world of genealogy.

As a young girl, I started performing in regional theater. I continued acting throughout my teens, and also hosted a television news program at my high school. However, my real passion was movies, and in 1992 I headed to Boston University to study film theory & criticism. When I graduated, I moved to Los Angeles and got a job in the film industry. I spent nearly 15 years there, working in feature screenplay development for various studio-based production companies. I also worked in animation story and spent a season working on the Academy Awards. I am proud to have collaborated with some amazing directors, producers, writers and actors during the course of my career. In 2009, I transitioned into event production, something that had fascinated me since I worked on

the Academy Awards. I now produce events for high profile nonprofits and social entrepreneurs, and have the privilege of creating events that set the stage for meaningful change in our world.

I met my husband, Kevin, while working in Hollywood. He was also in screenplay development and later in visual effects. Our first child, Declan, was born in Los Angeles in 2008. In 2010, Kevin was offered a job at LucasFilm, and we made the decision to move to the Bay Area. We settled in Novato and have grown to love Northern California. Our second child, Julia, was born in Greenbrae in 2012.

My love for genealogy started with my grandmothers. Both of my grandmothers were interested in their roots. My paternal grandmother didn't do much traditional genealogy, but she traveled to The Netherlands, where her father was born, and always shared stories about her ancestry with her grandchildren. Some of those stories were so outlandish, I assumed my Granny, with her flair for the dramatic, was joking. Later, when I started digging into her family history, I discovered that those stories were not only true, they were even more heart-wrenching than my Granny had revealed.

When my paternal grandmother died suddenly in 2001, it was a huge wake up call for me. I realized that my connection to my grandparents and my ability to hear their stories wasn't infinite, and I needed to spend more time with them. I started going to visit my maternal grandmother regularly so we could sort through her extensive genealogy files and look at her old photos. I started a family tree on Ancestry and began digitizing photos and documents. I transcribed all the oral history my grandmother wanted to pass along. I used the internet, something my grandmother was never comfortable with, to further the research she'd begun. We were a great team and those years of collaboration and bonding are some of my most precious memories. When my grandmother died in 2012, she left me all her photos, documents and files. In sorting through everything, I also wondered how I might share the information with other family members. In 2013, I started my blog, *Know Their Stories* (www.knowtheirstories.blogspot.com). It's been a wonderful way to share family history with my brothers and cousins. It has also allowed me to meet a number of new relatives who discovered my blog

while searching the internet for our shared ancestors.

In 2013, Sierra Pope convinced me to begin attending MCGS meetings and connecting with the community of genealogists in our area. I've also dipped my toe into the world of DNA research, and am grateful to Vernon Smith and the DNA interest group for helping me with that. I look forward to continuing to be a part of MCGS for many years to come.

**Thanks to Jami Davis and
Jo Ann Rowley-Minhoto,
for recent donations to
the Marin County Genealogical Society**

Marin Mystery Location

Do you know which area in Marin is shown in this photo, what the building was originally and is now, when it was constructed, and what disaster did it escape?

Courtesy [Lucretia Little History Room](#),
[Mill Valley Public Library](#).

The solution is upside down on the right.



**Solution to the Jan 2016 Mystery Location
"The Garden of Allah", Blythedale Canyon,
Mill Valley, circa 1915.**

Ralston White was a surveyor for his father Lovell White, founder of Tamalpais Land & Water Co., and discovered a beautiful knoll on Mount Tamalpais where he would build his dream home, a wedding gift to his new wife, Ruth. (He met her at a summer dance known as the "Blythedale Hop.") Construction began in 1912 of a 16-room mansion, designed by renowned San Francisco architect Willis Polk, that would be

ornamented with a creek-fed pool and heart-shaped front lawn. Materials had to be barged across the Bay and then hauled up by the Mt. Tam Railway. White called his beloved estate "Garden of Allah" after a favorite novel. Note the absence of trees in the photo. It survived the great fire of 1929, which burned 117 homes in Mill Valley.

The property is today used as a nonprofit center, known as the Ralston White Retreat.

Read more about *The History of the Garden of Allah* in this [article](#).