



President
Sandy Peterson

Vice President
Stephanie Bishop

Secretary
Brenda Brownlee

Treasurer/Membership
Shirley Brady

Publicity/Marilyn Riesbol
Deanna Baker

Program Director
Stephanie Bishop

Committees
Website: Dan Ardoin
Genie: Mike Farris

Website: www.smvgs.org
eMail: Roots@smvgs.org

Contact Us at the
SM Public Library

Member Meetings
Jan-Jun, Sep-Nov
3rd Thursday monthly
2-4pm
Preceded at 12:45pm
by the Board Meeting
Family History Center
908 Sierra Madre
Santa Maria

NEXT MEETING
2:00pm April 16, 2020
Family History Center

Presentation: Ladies of the Valley,
Cindy Ransick, Curator of the Santa
Maria Valley Historical Museum

Next Board Meeting
April 16, 12:45pm
Family History Center

Library Docent
By appointment

MARCH MEETING CANCELLED

President's Message March 2020



... Passing of the Gavel

At the general meeting held on 20 February 2020, the annual election was held, and Sandy Petersen was unanimously elected as the new president of our society. The new board has been slightly restructured and is as follows compared to previous positions. As you can see, the treasurer and membership has been combined as the dues were passed from one officer to the other, this should provide a smoother handling of the dues.

	Previous Board	New Board
President:	Deanna Baker	Sandy Petersen
Vice Pres:	Marilyn Reisbol	Stephanie Bishop
Secretary:	Brenda Brownlee	Brenda Brownlee
Treas/Mem:	Shirley Brady/Sandy Petersen	Shirley Brady
Program:	VACANT	Stephanie Bishop
Publicity:	Deanna Baker	Deanna Baker/Marilyn Riesbol

As outgoing President, I would like to say a huge thank you to the members of the board and to all the members for the support I have felt for the last two years. Like any organization, it takes the combined efforts of everyone to make it a success. Ideas and suggestions for programs are always welcome.

As a parting word, I would like to say "don't give up." The information to break down any brick wall is out there. It just has to be found. I recently found three missing children belonging to my second great grandfather after looking for 45 years. This was possible due to the digitization of a local Catholic Diocese record. I also had a contact just this last month from a cousin whose grandmother is a sister to my grandfather. He told me he Googled the name of our 2nd great grandfather, John W. Knepler, and our very own Genie Newsletter from March, 2019 "popped up." In my president message that month I had mentioned a connection with John W. and his sister Catherine. I know our society can be found on Google but I had no idea the newsletter and our society can be found just by Googling this person's name. Isn't this a wonderful time period to be a genealogist?

Deanna Baker
Society President



GENIE



Volume 3 Issue 3

Newsletter of the Santa Maria Valley Genealogy Society

March 2020

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SANTA MARIA FAMILY HISTORY CENTER CLASSES & ACTIVITIES

March 2020

908 Sierra Madre Ave, Santa Maria ~ email: ca_santamaria@familyhistorymail.org ~ phone (805) 928-4722

FHC Hours: CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Week Day	Day	Month	Start Time	End Time	Class Title or Activity	Presentation Type	Presenter
THUR	5	Mar.	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	"Writing Your Biographies" (tell your ancestors' stories; it's easier than you think)	SG Live Webcast	Linda Clarke
SAT	7	Mar.	10:00 AM	11:30 AM	"Reverse Genealogy, DNA, and Tracing the Living" (connecting with living relatives using DNA)	SCGS Live Webinar	So. CA Gen. Soc.
THUR	12	Mar.	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	"Publishing Your Biographies"	SG Live Webcast	Linda Clarke
T-W	17-18	Mar.	8:30 AM	4:30 PM	2-Day Advanced Family History Course (time lines, land, passenger lists, immigration, probate, DNA, brick walls, etc)	LA Live Webcast	Various
THUR	26	Mar.	6:30 PM	7:30 PM	Connecting Long Lost Italian-Swiss Ancestors with Their Families on the Central Coast (by Midge Buchert - Latin Translator) YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS ~ VERY INTERESTING!	Video Interview	Sandy Peterson
THUR	2	APRIL	6:30 PM	8:00 PM	"Thanks for the Memories: Basics of the FamilySearch Gallery" (Instruction and practice with adding photos, documents, audio files, & stories to the FamilySearch Memories tab)	BYU Pre-recorded Webinar	Kathryn Grant
SUN	5	APRIL	XXX	XXX	Due to General Conference weekend, THE FHC WILL BE CLOSED for our normal First Sunday Special Hours	XXXX	XXXX
THUR	9	APRIL	10-2 PM	7-9 PM	SCANNING EVENT ~ Call for an appointment & learn how to scan your photos and documents. Bring a USB thumb drive or purchase one at the FHC for \$5.	Guided Help	FHC Staff

PLEASE RSVP ON ALL CLASSES VIA E-MAIL OR CALL THE FAMILY HISTORY CENTER (INFO ABOVE)

Bulletin Board

The Family History Center is offering a two-day Advanced Family History Course on Mar. 17-18, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. The cost is \$4 for a USB thumb drive of all the slides and handouts and an hour lunch break will occur so plan for that as well. This particular course will only be offered twice this year. Please check out all our classes and RSVP for anything you're interested in attending.

Also note that our email address has recently changed to:

ca_santamaria@familyhistorymail.org

so be sure to update our information in your contacts list. If you have any questions or want to register for a class, please email or give us a call (our contact info is on the calendar). See you at the Family History Center!

We'd love to help you research your family or scan your photos!

Santa Maria Family History Center

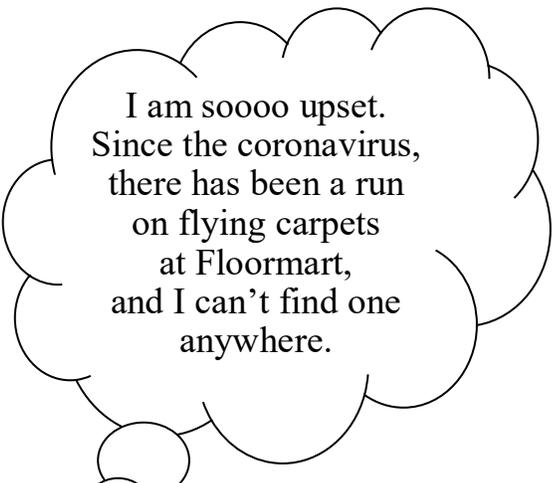
908 Sierra Madre Ave., Santa Maria, CA 93454

805-928-4722

Hours:

Mon, 10 am - 2 pm; Tue & Wed, 10 am - 2 pm & 7 pm - 9 pm

Genie Says...



I am soooo upset. Since the coronavirus, there has been a run on flying carpets at Floormart, and I can't find one anywhere.





The West Family Bible, Part 3 of 3

By Sandy Peterson

An 1831 Bible was given to Sandy Peterson by her friends, the McCords, in early 2018. The McCords received it from their neighbors, the Allens, who bought it at a used book store or antique shop near Highway 1 in California about 15 years prior. Mr. Allen was interested in old books and Bibles. His wife said that he hated to see old Bibles for sale in book stores. When Mr. Allen passed away, Mrs. Allen passed the large Bible on to the McCords, knowing that as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the McCords had an interest in researching genealogy and family history. All of the people involved in returning the Bible live on the central coast of California. (Part 1 was published in January 2020, and Part 2 was published in February 2020.)

David's Daughter

Waiting for an answer from Mr. French, the possible James West descendant, was the next long step – a practice in patience. The letter to him was mailed in October of 2018, and as of today's date, March 2020, he has not responded. There are several possible reasons why he hasn't replied, but a few might be that the address for him was no longer current, or that he passed away, or that he chose not to respond to a stranger's requests for information about his family.

After the letter was sent to Mr. French, Sandy continued to look for clues to who the West family descendants might be. In mid-October while checking public member trees at Ancestry.com, she discovered a tree that listed David James Bridge Williams as the son of Dorothy May West. This was a real breakthrough, or at least it could be, IF the author of the tree would respond and answer a few questions. Remember that some people use Ancestry.com very sporadically; only signing in every few months – or less! If they don't sign in regularly, they may not see that messages have been sent to them many months prior.



"Clinton" was the name of the owner of the tree that seemed to be a match to the precise West family being researched. Immediately, a note was sent via Ancestry's internal messaging system asking if he (Clinton) was a direct descendant of David James Bridge Williams. Clinton was also told that some vital family history information, which belonged to the West family, was recently found in an old Bible. Hopefully, this would entice him to quickly send a message.

It's encouraging to find someone with a tree with matching

names, but not knowing when the message would be seen or answered is one of the frustrating parts of doing this kind of research. Patience is always helpful, as well as having multiple families to research and use as a distraction!

It was a race to see who would reply first: Mr. French or Clinton. About a month and a half later, in early December of 2018, the wait was over. A response came from, not Mr. French, but from Clinton. The first line of his message read: "No, I'm not [a descendant of David James Bridge Williams], but my half-sister, Beverly, is his daughter." He further explained that he and Beverly shared the same mother, Cynthia, who had passed away. Clinton knew that David had been a bomb disposal expert, plus many other details that seemed to fit the family location and time period.

Sadly, the story was told that David's first marriage to Beverly's mother had broken up due to probable PTSD from his military career and some ensuing addictions, etc. Next, Clinton gave some information that was rather private, but helpful: he said that his sister had an account on Facebook and gave the name that she used there. He also mentioned the names of Beverly's children (also on Facebook) and the town where she currently lives. He confided that he and his sister were not close because they had not grown up together and were about 9 years apart in age. His message closed with his UK telephone number and encouragement to keep in contact.

What a fantastic breakthrough! Of course, Sandy reached out to Beverly as soon as possible via Facebook on 6 December 2018:

"Hi Beverly, I hope you don't mind that I'm reaching out to you this way. I research family history and a friend passed along an old Bible to me, which has some of your West family history in it. Your brother has a tree on Ancestry.com, which helped me to identify the correct family. Please let me know if you're interested in the family information pages from the Bible.

Regards, Sandy"



The West Family Bible, Part 3 of 3 (Continued from page 3)

Again, all one can do is hope that a message sent by a stranger through Messenger will be seen in a timely manner. At Facebook, if you're not a "friend" with someone, they may not ever see your message because it will go into a special hidden folder. (Contacting someone out of the blue via Messenger can cause them to be a bit suspicious. It was best to let Beverly know that her brother had passed along her name and that it wasn't a random contact).

Somehow, Beverly quickly saw the message and responded the very next day with a one-liner: "Please contact me." Over the next few days, Beverly and Sandy corresponded via Facebook's messaging system, though there were some technical difficulties.

About a week later, Sandy forwarded the images of the West Family Bible pages to Beverly through the messaging system. The 5 digital photos of the hand-written pages of family information from the Bible, plus the title page were sent. Beverly was the one who needed to be in possession of this vital information, and now it was at least on her computer or phone for her to use as she wished.

In early January 2019, after a little more correspondence, efforts were finally coordinated for Sandy and Beverly to talk on the phone. Beverly sent her phone number and they spoke for about half an hour. Sandy learned so much about Beverly's story and how much of a surprise the discovery of the West Family Bible was to Beverly. As a young girl, she had only met her father, David, once. Her father was in the military, had served in India, married her mother there in India, and moved several times. As a teen, she, again, had only met her father once after he was married to his second wife. Beverly learned from her step-mother, that her father had died about 10 years after her second time meeting him. There had been no more chances to ask him about his family, her grandparents, etc.

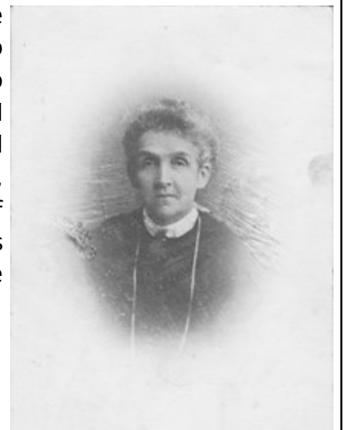
To Beverly, her father and his family - her paternal heritage - was a huge mystery. She hadn't grown up knowing her paternal grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins. The first time Beverly heard of the West surname was when her sister in law did some family history research and discovered that Beverly's paternal grandmother's maiden name was Dorothy May West. So, when she heard of the family Bible and the detailed West family information, she was surprised and delighted!



Soon after the phone call, Beverly sent Sandy a few photos of herself, her parents (photo on left), her daughter and grandchildren. A remarkable connection had been made! To follow up, Sandy wrote to Paul Byrne and Lyn Layland at the Eden Valley Historical Society, telling them of Beverly, plus thanking them for their efforts.

Soon after the phone call, Beverly sent Sandy a few photos of herself, her parents (photo on left), her daughter and grandchildren. A remarkable connection had been made! To follow up, Sandy wrote to Paul Byrne and Lyn Layland at the Eden Valley Historical Society, telling them of Beverly, plus thanking them for their efforts.

Over the next two months, Sandy and Beverly had many more messenger conversations. The two even thought of planning to meet when Sandy would be doing some family history in England and Wales in the fall of 2019. It was a wonderful thought, but in the end, it didn't work out since Beverly had a trip planned for the exact dates Sandy would be in England. For several weeks, Beverly sent documents and told bits of her memories regarding her family to fill in the gaps of the West family story, mostly the David James Bridge Williams story. Sandy continued searching for clues and photos using Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org. Permission was given by Beverly to share the digital Bible pages on FamilySearch.org so that anyone else connected to these particular West and Kennard family members could study, view, and print the pages, if they desired. This photo of Beverly's dad's Aunt Hettie was found on Ancestry.com (on the right).





The West Family Bible, Part 3 of 3 (Continued from page 4)

In mid-March, new information was still popping up for Beverly. She had never known when her dad died and where he was buried. She told Sandy, "I spent days walking along the cemeteries" looking for her father's resting place. When she learned his death date, she said, "Oh my goodness. That's quite taken my breath away. I've been looking for so long." Her dad, David, passed away in September of 1969 in England.

Toward the end of March, Beverly wanted to find out how much it would cost to have the Bible packaged and mailed to her in England. Sandy took the large book to be weighed at a shipping store. The nice young man there gave her some tips for shipping moisture sensitive items, such as books, to humid countries. Remember that the old leather binding was cracking and falling off, so all of that had to be secured first. Then, the Bible was tightly wrapped in a plastic bag. Next, bubble wrap was added all around with packing tape. After all of the packaging was added, the Bible weighed in at 9 pounds, 14.6 ounces! For those who are curious, the cost was just under \$88 to have it mailed by the USPS from California to the heart of England. It was insured for \$200, although to Beverly and Sandy it was irreplaceable. The Bible arrived on Beverly's doorstep after 11 days of travel. Here's a photo of Beverly with her prized-package (on the right):

Beverly was so grateful to have the Bible in her hands, plus the family stories that were uncovered because of the extra digging that was done. She looked forward to showing the

Bible to her family members, too. Sandy and Beverly still communicate regularly and hope to meet in England one day! Too bad Mr. French hasn't replied yet. He and Beverly would have some very interesting stories to share with each other.



Site of the Month

Personally, I am not a big fan of Family Tree magazine, but the featured article this month, and on their website, may be of interest. You may not, probably do not, think of yourself as a beginner, but there is always something we can learn.

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/25-best-genealogy-websites-for-beginners/#records>

"If you're just starting to research your family history, you need a strategy. There are so many places to go for online genealogy records and websites to learn about your heritage. You want resources you can find online that are the most current, richest with ancestral information and the easiest to use. Our list of 25 beginner-friendly websites will get you started. "

