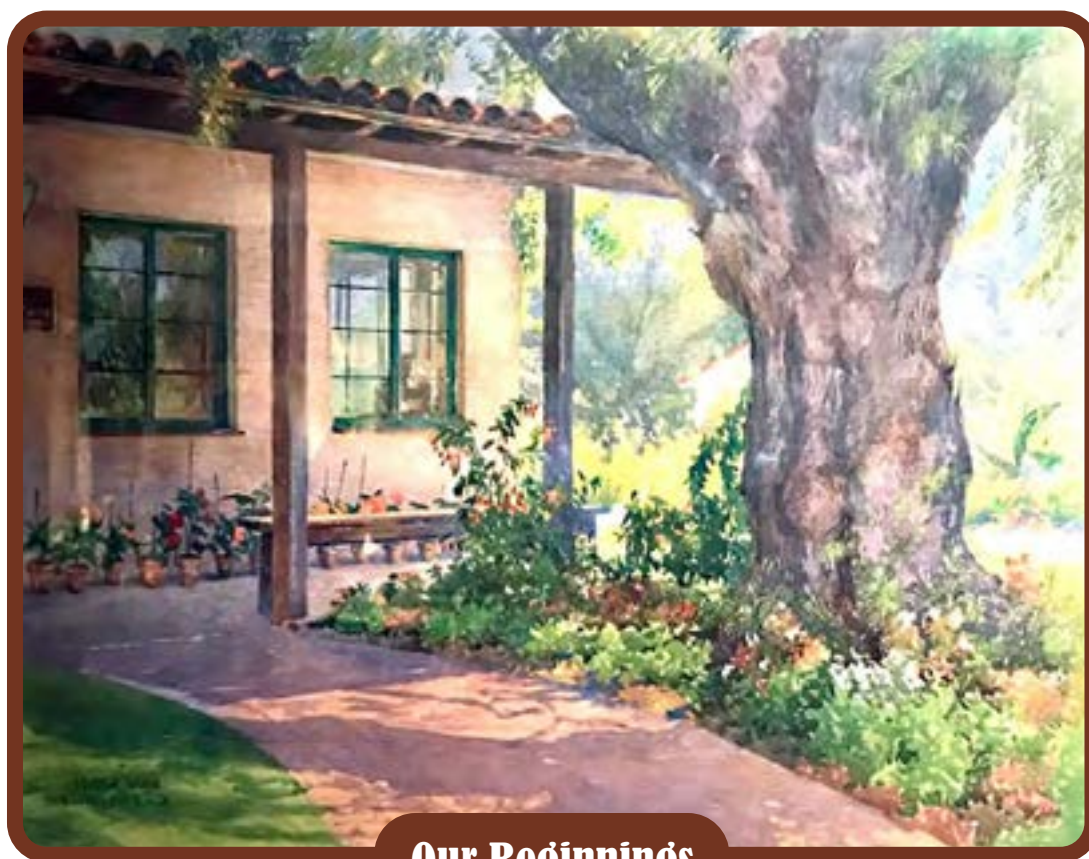




# Ancestors West

*A quarterly publication for the members of the*  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
*Fall 2022 Vol. 47, No.3*



## **Our Beginnings**

### **Our 50th Anniversary Issue**

Melville Sahyun: a life in Biochemistry

A Surprising Discovery on the Sahyun Shelves

Dragged Kicking and Screaming into Genealogy

It All Started with an Open House!



## Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society

[www.sbgen.org](http://www.sbgen.org)

E-mail: [info@sbgen.org](mailto:info@sbgen.org)

### Sahyun Genealogy Library (SBCGS facility)

316 Castillo St., Santa Barbara 93101

Phone: (805) 884-9909

Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10:00 AM–4:00 PM

Sunday 1:00–4:00 PM

Third Saturday 1:00–4:00 PM (Except August)

**Membership:** Benefits include *Tree Tips* monthly newsletter and *Ancestors West* (quarterly publication).

**Active** (individual)–\$40; **Family** (2 same household)–\$60; **Friend**–\$50; **Donor**–\$75; **Patron**–\$150; **Life**–\$1000 (one-time donation)

**Meetings:** Regular monthly meetings are held on the third Saturday of each month except August. Meetings begin at 10:30 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 21 E. Constance Ave. at State Street in Santa Barbara. At 9:30, special interest groups (SIGs) meet that include the following: Writers, JewishGen, DNA, German Ancestry Research, Genealogy and Technology, Italian Roots, French Canadian Genealogy, Civil War, New Member and Beginning Genealogy, and Scandinavian Roots.

#### The Mission Statement of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society

Established in 1972, the mission of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society is to foster an interest in the study of family history through educational programs, the operation of a genealogical research library, and the preservation of local genealogical records to enhance our understanding of ourselves and our heritage.

*Ancestors West* is currently published quarterly in February, May, August, November. Articles of family history or of historical nature are welcomed and used as space permits (see inside back cover for submission details). As available, current and back issues are \$6.00 each including postage. Library subscription to *Ancestors West* is \$20.00 per year. *Ancestors West* is indexed in the **PERiodical Source Index (PERSI)** published by the Allen County Public Library, Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

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### **Land Acknowledgment Statement:**

“The land on which many of us live and where our library is located is part of the ancient homeland and traditional territory of the Chumash people. We recognize and respect the Chumash Peoples past, present, and future and their continuing presence in their homeland as we join in stewarding this land which we all cherish.”



FROM THE EDITOR  
*Kristin Ingalls*  
*antkap@cox.net*

## An Invitation from a Cousin

**M**Y FIRST INTRODUCTION to family history was when my mother and I were visiting her family in Utah. At that point, I knew I had a mom, a dad, some grandparents, aunts, uncles and a bunch of cousins – many I had never met. So here we were with a large gathering of people I knew nothing about. Mom and her sisters were talking about Aunt Ada and her unruly children, Uncle Jack dying on his wedding night (2nd marriage, thankfully), how much Selena Maude looked like her cousin, Martha, and my, weren't there a lot of O'Brays in the Paradise Cemetery? As I listened, I asked, "Mom, who are all these people?"

With my busy life, I filed all that away in some corner of my mind, still wondering about poor Uncle Jack from time to time.

My sister, Lynne, had fallen in the genealogy rabbit hole, but I still did not pay much attention until I saw a pedigree chart she had done. It was huge! I was impressed, but still, there were just faceless names. Lynne emailed me that we had a third cousin named Judy living in Santa Barbara. I called Judy who invited me to one of the Saturday meetings at the First Presbyterian Church. I did show up, and wowee! I had a whole room full of Best Friends! Have you ever been to a large gathering where you immediately felt you were with "your people?" That was my first meeting – and every meeting since.

Judy told me about the Sahyun Library, so I went down with the chart my sister had done and was greeted by Emily Aasted. I rolled out the chart. Emily quickly perused the names and pointed to one: William Brewster. "Oh, I'm related to the Brewsters too," she said. She explained a little about that line, sat me down at a computer in that tiny computer room we had then, and pulled up some records about the Brewster family. How much better can it get than that?

I can happily say that my life changed profoundly that day. Not only did I have two new cousins, I had a hobby (some might say an addiction) that would last forever. And it would never get old or boring.

I recently posed the question at our monthly meeting: "If you had not found genealogy, what would you be doing now?" Think on this a bit. It is truly a profound question. How many hours do you think you have spent on your genealogy, helping others, volunteering

at the library? How many vacation miles have you traveled to places your ancestors lived, historic societies and libraries, and yes...cemeteries? And wasn't it wonderful, magical, and fun?

What makes it even more meaningful, at least for me, are all the like-minded people I am now friends with – my library buddies. While friends and family who have no interest in genealogy roll their eyes or run and hide when I start "sharing," I know I have a huge network of better-than-family friends who not only understand, but encourage me and each other. How lonely life would be without all of YOU in my life. Thanks!

### The theme for our next issue: THREADS

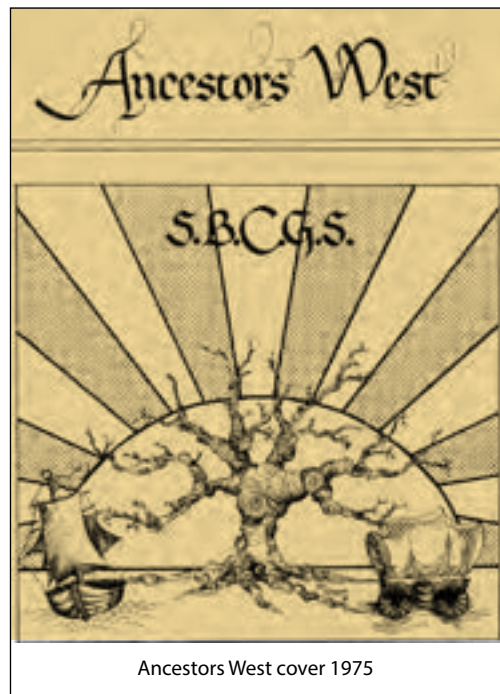
I can almost see the puzzled look on your faces. Threads?? What kind of a theme is that?

Give it a little while to percolate in your brain. What image, idea, memory does the word "threads" evoke? Any of these?

Following a thread; tying up loose threads; hanging on by a thread; threading your way through; images of clothing, of occupations using thread; "it was like threading a needle;" weaving; the tapestry of life; the common threads that bind us together; the continuous thread of past and present; threads on screws or machinery, parts coming together to form something new; conversation threads; DNA threads; sewing bees; cotton plantations; threadbare furniture, carpets and possessions.

And lots more! Keep thinking – and then write your thoughts, stories, research, ideas and send them to me for our next issue. The **deadline is October 15**. I think this is going to be a fun issue!

*Kristin Ingalls, Editor antkap@cox.net*



Ancestors West cover 1975

# Our Beginnings

IT ALL BEGAN IN 1972 at a Goleta, California, Newcomers meeting.

Several of the Newcomers discovered a common interest in exploring their family histories. They gathered at the home of Cathy Maddox to discuss the possibility of forming a family history or genealogy society in the Santa Barbara area. Thinking others in the area might share the same interest, they placed an ad in the local paper which, to their delight, brought a positive response from 27 people. Their first meeting was November 27, 1972. Now, 50 years later, we have one of the premier genealogical societies and libraries in the country.

Founding member Carol Roth commented that in 1972 there were no home computers, no online genealogy websites, and all queries were done by mail or phone call. The few records that were available then were mainly on microfiche at the LDS Library in Los Angeles or Salt Lake City, and so required a "field trip."

The new Society grew slowly. It elected officers and held meetings in members' homes with people sharing stories, books and research tips. In time the Goleta Public Library became their home base, the place where they stored their genealogy books. Society meetings took place in the library conference room. At that time the library's genealogy book section consisted of books donated by members of the group.



In 1979, a new home was at the Goleta Valley Community Center

In 1979, a new home was at the Goleta Valley Community Center where shelves were built to house the ever-growing collection of genealogy books. Meetings and classes were held in the Center's classrooms. The ever-expanding library and membership then moved in 1992 to the Covarrubias Adobe in downtown Santa Barbara.

The Society's final move was in 1998 to its present location, the Sahyun Library. Our Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society now had a permanent home.

Throughout the early years, the Society members held classes, workshops and seminars in addition to the monthly meetings. They began publishing *Ancestors West* monthly, collected and published local records,



In 1992 home was the Covarrubias Adobe in downtown Santa Barbara.



instituted Surname files, learned how to repair books, had rummage and treasures sales, began the sales table. Members had displays at local libraries, held open houses, published a cookbook, cleared a local pauper's cemetery, and even had a weekly *Ancestor Search* television program on the local TV

station! As the Society became more and more visible in the community, its membership increased.

In the beginning, dues started at \$3.00 a year in 1974, jumped to \$5.00 in 1975 and \$10 in 1979. Few members knew what a bargain their membership was.

Highlights in early members' memories are the "field trips" they took together to the LDS libraries in Los Angeles and Salt Lake, the Los Angeles Public Library, the Southern California Genealogical Society and their Jamboree, the Southern California Immigrant Society Library, and the Sons of the Revolution Library.

This is just a small glimpse of what this visionary group accomplished. We invite you to read more in the early *Ancestor West* editions which are available on our website, [sbgen.org](http://sbgen.org).



Our first "computer lab," with two computers.

# A TOUCH OF OLD SANTA BARBARA

## The Great House Detective

By Betsy J. Green

## A Home for A Historian

**I**N 1915, WOMEN IN CALIFORNIA could vote in local elections, but would not be able to vote in national elections until 1920. But nothing stopped women from buying property and having a house built. However, single women doing this were certainly in the minority.

This home's first owner, Edith Codman, was in that rare group. Edith was the daughter of a successful Boston attorney, and she was a graduate of Radcliffe College (1891).



Edith was a woman of the great outdoors. She never married, perhaps because she was too busy hiking or gardening. She was a member of the Sierra Club, and also Santa Barbara's Nature Study Club and Garden Club. She had first visited Santa Barbara in 1903 on a nature excursion, when she was in her early 40s.

In 1915, she bought the lot at 212 East Mission Street, and had this home built. While doing research on Craftsman homes (more about that below), I found an article that same year about John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club, in *Craftsman* magazine.

The article must have resonated with Edith: "Whoever has learned to call the western trees and wildflowers by name, holds the name of John Muir in reverence. His name will be forever associated with mountains, forests, glaciers, storms, with the big, fundamental facts of nature, and, too with its delicate, evanescent, poetic beauty."

In 1920, Edith was part of a group of hikers that camped on Santa Cruz Island for several days. And in 1929, she donated a sample of a pine tree from that island to the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum. Edith passed away in 1931, and her brother William Codman, also single, lived in the home until 1943.

The present homeowners, the Moss family, have lived here since 1986. They love the old character of their home. They told me that Dr. Edward J. Lamb and his wife Louise had lived in the home in the 1940s and 1950s. The homeowners pointed out that the Lambs had also lived in the 2405 Santa Barbara Street home, which I had written about in July 2020.

### The Historian Moves In

The most notable residents of the home, however, were Walker A. Tompkins and his family who moved here in 1960. He is probably the best-known history writer in Santa Barbara. The *worldcat.org* (world catalog) website lists 79 non-fiction titles written by Tompkins. Most are history books about this area. (That's more than all of us other history writers added together.)

"Two-Gun" Tompkins worked for decades on a 1928 typewriter (remember typewriters?) churning out dozens of cowboy novels with titles like *Ghost Mine Gold*, *Border Ambush*, and *Deadhorse Express*. In 1957, he began writing a column titled *Santa Barbara Yesterdays* for the *Santa Barbara News-Press* and continued until the 1970s.



No matter where you live in Santa Barbara, Tompkins probably wrote a book about your neighborhood: *Downtown, The Eastside, Goleta, The Good Land, Hope Ranch, Montecito, Old Mission - Mission Canyon, San Marcos Pass, San Roque, The Mesa, The Riviera, The Samarkand, The Waterfront, and The Westside.*

Tompkins was also an amateur radio (ham radio) operator. While he lived in this house, he published *DX Brings Danger*, a sci-fi novel about a ham-radio operator on San Miguel Island. I reached out to Dorothy Oksner, also an amateur radio operator. She said that DX means distant transmission by radio from and to a distant planned location like an island.

According to his obituary in 1988, Tompkins also wrote 1,200 magazine articles, stories, and scripts for radio, movies, and television, and had his own radio show for more than 20 years.

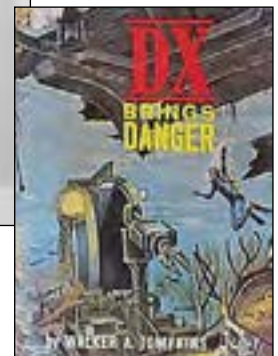
The 212 E. Mission Street home is a Craftsman-style house. (That's why I was looking at *Craftsman* magazine, as I mentioned earlier.) The home's wide eaves and decorative brackets are typical of this style.

The scalloped picket fence, wreathed with Peruvian lily, sits behind the prettiest parkway on the block that is ornamented with small shrubs and flagstones. These create a natural, homey look that Edith Codman would surely approve of.

Please do not disturb the residents of 212 East Mission Street. This article originally appeared in the *Santa Barbara Independent*. Photos by Betsy J. Green.



Courtesy: *The Royal Rancho*



Courtesy: *DX Brings Danger*



Tompkins 1928 Typewriter. Courtesy: *The Mesa Paper*



**WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOUSE?** Betsy is always looking for older homes (1920s or earlier) in central Santa Barbara for her **GREAT HOUSE DETECTIVE** column. Get in touch with her through the contact page of her website—[betsyjgreen.com](http://betsyjgreen.com)

# Melville Sahyun: a life in Biochemistry

By Melville R.V. Sahyun, Ph.D.

[abridged and updated from Bull. Hist. Chem. 2019, 43(2), 111-124]

*Stoutness of heart, humility of soul and open-mindedness are the*

*Keys to human understanding and happiness;*

*No one endowed with these virtues can be but honest,*

*Just and tolerant to his neighbor and himself.*

— Melville Sahyun

MELVILLE SAHYUN WAS BORN in 1895 in Obei, Lebanon, the son of a prominent Beirut physician, Dr. Fares Sahyoun. He graduated (B.A., biology) from the American University of Beirut (AUB), planning to follow in his father's footsteps into a career as a practicing physician. He served there as an instructor for three years. In 1919 he was appointed to the Secretariat of the Commandant of the British Mediterranean Navy (Army and Navy of occupation) and assigned to the office of the S/S Prince Line in Beirut; he was later transferred to Cairo. In the latter two assignments he was responsible to British intelligence and, according to his own account, served as "eyes and ears" for them. In 1923 he emigrated to the United States, in part because he did not want to spend his life in such a violence-prone society as was Lebanon at that time. Wm. McClure Thomson,<sup>1</sup> one of the founders of AUB, writes that Lebanon "...has always been subject to revolutions, invasions and calamities of various kinds; ...a feeling of insecurity hovers over the land like a dismal spectre."

Melville initially joined his uncle Nicolás, who was a woodcarver and violin maker, in Santa Barbara.<sup>2</sup> By this time Melville had also become an accomplished violinist and during his Santa Barbara years played second violin in a string quartet that performed regularly. In Santa Barbara he began his scientific career, which can be divided into three parts or phases:

Diabetes research. This subject had great personal significance for Sahyun, as diabetes mellitus (Type 2) was endemic in his family.

Proteins and amino acids in nutrition. He was drawn into this area of research by the exigencies of World War II, and became a world recognized expert.

Drug discovery. He directed the final phase of his career as the head of his own private research organization, Sahyun Laboratories, in Santa Barbara, California.

My purpose in writing the original version of this article was to review Melville's accomplishments in each of these phases of his career, in turn, and place them in the context of the science of the day. In this essay I will maintain the same agenda, though writing for the general reader rather than the chemical specialist.

Diabetes research in the 1920s and 1930s focused primarily on the chemistry of insulin, following its isolation and the discovery of its therapeutic value by Frederick Banting and Charles Best in the laboratory of

Prof. J. J. R. Macleod in Toronto, a discovery for which Banting and Macleod received the Nobel Prize.<sup>3</sup> Melville Sahyun's first position in which he could carry out diabetes research was at the Potter Metabolic Clinic of Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, then headed by Dr. William D. Sansum, who was the first American scientist to isolate and use insulin therapeutically. This institution subsequently evolved into the William

Sansum Medical Research Foundation of today (also known as the Sansum Diabetes Research Institute), as has been documented by historian Walker Tompkins.<sup>4</sup> There Melville had the good fortune to collaborate with



Melville Sahyun in the 1930s, at the time he was particularly active in diabetes research. (Author's collection)

Dr. Norman R. Blatherwick, Sansum's chief chemist.

At the time, insulin was obtained by laborious extraction from the pancreases of slaughtered mammals, usually cattle obtained from a nearby slaughterhouse, without controls on potency. The response of the blood glucose level in rabbits to a given preparation was used as a method to standardize the dosage of insulin. The



Dr. William Sansum  
(photo courtesy of Sansum  
Diabetes Research Institute)

problem with this method was that different rabbits

responded differently. Sahyun and Blatherwick<sup>5</sup> proposed a method of "calibrating" rabbits by measuring an individual rabbit's response to a reference insulin preparation. Then, the dosage given to a patient could be adjusted for the potency of the insulin preparation in a controlled manner. In the course of this work they observed that rabbits repeatedly dosed with insulin developed insulin resistance, as was later observed in human patients.<sup>6</sup> Their work also established the rabbit as the animal model of choice for pre-clinical evaluation of diabetes therapies.

Insulin is a protein which is degraded in the alimentary canal prior to absorption, and then as now could not be administered orally. There was the suggestion of an orally active insulin even in Dr. Sansum's day,<sup>7</sup> but an "oral insulin" still remains an elusive target for the pharmaceutical industry. Blatherwick, Sahyun and their Santa Barbara co-workers<sup>8</sup> proposed a standard method



for the preparation, isolation and purification of insulin. The potency of their preparation was over twice that reported by Best in Toronto.<sup>9</sup> However, despite rigorous purification even this, best-available insulin of the day, was grossly impure.

In 1928 Prof. Macleod, in whose laboratory Banting and Best had first prepared insulin, visited Potter Clinic and encouraged Melville to pursue a Ph.D. in biochemistry rather than the M.D., which had been his original career goal, and which, according to Tompkins,<sup>4</sup> he was still considering. Melville Sahyun accordingly enrolled at Stanford University. In his M.A. thesis work under the direction of Prof. Luck in the Department of Food Science, Melville Sahyun studied the effect of epinephrine (adrenalin) on the biochemistry of glycogen in rabbits,<sup>10</sup> work which actually had been started at the Potter Metabolic Clinic in Santa Barbara.<sup>11</sup> In one publication on epinephrine from this period, in work that was a continuation of his thesis work, Sahyun and another Stanford colleague, G. E. Webster<sup>12</sup> cited the vasodilator properties of epinephrine and related it to other catechol derivatives, e.g., synephrine.<sup>13</sup> Melville would revisit this line of research in the third phase of his career.

Melville continued his work on insulin when he moved to the laboratories of the pharmaceutical company, Frederick Stearns and Company, in Detroit, Michigan, in 1934. Shortly after accepting this position, Melville married Geraldine Valde, his sweetheart from Santa Barbara. They were married in South Bend, Indiana and set up housekeeping in Detroit, a rather foreign environment for a born-and-bred Californian. They took an apartment on the seventh floor of the then-new



Ste. Clair River and Belle Isle, as seen from Melville and Geraldine Sahyun's apartment; oil painting by Geraldine Valde Sahyun (author's collection).

Art Deco Kean Building, overlooking Belle Isle Park.

The Stearns company was interested in becoming a supplier of clinically useful insulin, Eli Lilly and Co. being their principal competitor in this market. For their commercialization, Stearns required an insulin that was stable, pure and of reproducible potency. Sahyun focused on exploiting crystalline insulin. (He

is sometimes credited with "inventing" crystalline insulin, but this, of course, is not the case). Insulin was first obtained in crystalline form by Abel, and had been reported in 1926.<sup>14</sup>



Frederick Stearns and Co. headquarters, Detroit, MI (wikipedia.com)

Sahyun chose to exploit the observation that crystalline insulin contains zinc.<sup>15</sup> Using this method, Sahyun and co-workers were able to show that zinc (ca. 0.02 wt. %) is essential to the stability of insulin preparations,<sup>16</sup> which led to the commercialization by Stearns of crystalline insulin as the zinc derivative in 1938.<sup>17</sup> Melville's contribution to the introduction of crystalline insulin to the marketplace may be summarized as developing the findings of Abel, Scott and others into a commercially feasible process. His process patent was issued in 1939.<sup>18</sup> The clinical superiority of this insulin, with respect to both rate of absorption and duration of effect, had already been demonstrated.<sup>19</sup> Much later Melville published a tutorial article encapsulating the history of insulin in diabetes therapy.<sup>20</sup>

With the advent of World War II, research at Frederick Stearns and Company turned to humanitarian efforts on supplements which could facilitate rebuilding tissues of patients with severe wounds and burns, i.e., war injuries, as well as facilitating the recovery of victims of malnutrition due to inhumane imprisonment, e.g., prisoners of war and Holocaust survivors. In the latter cases the victims had subsisted on a diet deficient in protein. A protein supplement would also offset the loss of physiological nitrogen accompanying trauma.<sup>21</sup> In the course of his background research for this ambitious project, Melville published a comprehensive review article with over 500 references on the nature of protein deficiency in humans.<sup>22</sup>

The resulting product would have to be suitable for use in military field hospitals. The extreme conditions under which the product might be used in a military theatre of operations and the extended shelf life required for overseas shipment required that the amino acid solution be stabilized against crystallization. To this end Sahyun added a "protective colloid," e.g., pectin.<sup>23</sup> The final product, an intravenously administered protein supplement, was sold under the trade name "Parenamine™," and was described in a Journal of the American Medical Association editorial as a "... physiologic short cut sparing the need for digestion and

absorption in the gastrointestinal tract."<sup>24</sup> The date of this editorial, which accompanied an article disclosing the use of Parenamine in clinical practice,<sup>25</sup> indicates that the product, development of which had started as early as 1939, had been made available to the military medical community by 1943. In the post-War era, Parenamine continued to be marketed. Parenteral amino acids were recommended preoperatively and post-operatively for patients with gastrointestinal disease and/or obstruction, and were described as having "...the advantage of producing complete gastrointestinal rest, equal if not superior to that induced by morphine."<sup>26</sup> Parenamine or its equivalent is still available in the marketplace; however the trade name itself is now used by the Nestlé Company in Europe for a different, oral nutritional supplement.

In the course of this work Melville Sahyun became well-connected in the community of protein and amino acid researchers and established a strong network among the technical staffs of the raw material, e.g., casein, pectin, etc., suppliers as well as in the military medical community. He was sufficiently highly regarded by his colleagues to be invited to edit a monograph titled "Outline of the Amino Acids and Proteins,"<sup>27</sup> which was published in 1944. This book incorporated chapters by academic, industrial and government scientists who were established authorities in their areas of expertise. Sahyun had already arranged in 1945 with his friend and colleague Carl Schmidt to co-edit a more extensive monograph on proteins and amino acids with an emphasis on nutrition. Schmidt, however, passed away in 1946, and Sahyun undertook the editorship of the new volume on his own, he and Schmidt having already agreed on the topics and contributors to be invited. The new book was titled "Proteins and Amino Acids in Nutrition" and comprised 15 chapters. Sahyun's own chapter was entitled "Plasma Proteins and their Relation to Nutrition."<sup>28</sup> The book remains available in facsimile or replica editions, and has been described, albeit in promotional material, in 2015 as having "... been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and...part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it... Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public."<sup>29</sup>

After three generations of family management of Frederick Stearns and Company, in 1946 the Stearns family relinquished management of the firm and sold its businesses to the Sterling Drug Company. Melville Sahyun declined a management position with Sterling, for which he seemed eminently qualified on the basis of his leadership of the Parenamine program, and chose to re-invent himself as a "Chemist Consultant." He remained in this status for three years, 1946-1949. During this time he maintained an affiliation with the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas, which, among other things, resulted in his contracting malaria, which required extended hospitalization. During this time, he endeavored to enhance his scientific reputation and promote his expertise as a consultant in the field

of amino acid and protein chemistry by publishing three definitive review articles. The first dealt with the metabolism and nutritive importance of tryptophan.<sup>30</sup> He went on to write a comprehensive review article on the biochemistry of methionine, another of the essential amino acids.<sup>31</sup> The final review<sup>32</sup> dealt with the relationship of amino acids to the nutritive value of proteins. The main point he emphasized in this article was the importance of the simultaneous availability of all the amino acids for protein biosynthesis, an "all-or-none" situation as he termed it. This point had already been made strongly by Melville's colleagues, Madelyn Womack and Charles Kade in the earlier monograph he had edited.<sup>33</sup> It is now understood that the essential amino acids need to be available not only simultaneously, but in ratios corresponding to the body's needs.

In 1949 Melville Sahyun's career took a new direction. He established an independent research organization, Sahyun Laboratories, back in Santa Barbara, California. He was motivated both by his expressed frustration with the bureaucracy of large industrial organizations, and also by the strong desire on the part of his wife, Geraldine, to live in her home state of California. The focus of his new laboratory was to be drug discovery. To this end he put together a team of synthetic organic chemists, to turn his biochemical intuitions into molecular reality. He had a building especially designed and built for this work in Santa Barbara; the structure is now the home of the Sahyun Library of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society. The endeavor had the shortcomings of not having any capability for animal research, as well as no ongoing collaboration for clinical testing. Furthermore, there is no documentation of Melville Sahyun having been involved in any fashion in drug discovery prior to the establishment of Sahyun Laboratories.



Sahyun Laboratories in 1950—watercolor by Fridolin Haas.  
(Author's collection)

Drug discovery at that time was a much more intuitive, hit-or-miss process than now. The laboratory's first successful molecule was biphenamine, for which mild antihistaminic, fungicidal, antibacterial, and anesthetic properties were claimed.<sup>34</sup> Chemically it may be viewed as a rather elaborate aspirin analog. The Sahyun team

went on to formulate it as a topical analgesic-antibacterial preparation for “first aid” application, much as Neosporin™ is used today. Without the backing of a large pharmaceutical manufacturer, the clinical trial data to obtain FDA approval for over-the-counter marketing were not accessible, and they could only obtain approval for marketing the formulation as an “experimental,” prescription-only medication. Melville tried marketing the product himself under the trade name Melsaphine™ for a short period of time without significant market penetration. It turned out to be popular for veterinary applications, however. Biphenamine is reportedly currently used in Sebaclen™ antibacterial shampoo marketed by Carter-Wallace Inc.,<sup>35</sup> and is still manufactured in Germany as a raw material for the pharmaceutical industry.<sup>36</sup>

The second important molecule to come out of Sahyun Laboratories was tetrahydrozoline sometimes known as “tetryzoline”.<sup>37</sup> Development of tetrahydrozoline was a matter of optimization of the blood pressure enhancing response of known compounds by molecular modifications. Since the documented structure-activity relationships were based in large part on naturally occurring compounds, e.g., adrenaline, this strategy exemplifies the confidence of synthetic organic chemists of the day in their ability to improve upon nature. Blood pressure enhancement by tetrahydrozoline results from a vasoconstrictor (blood vessel contracting) action. This suggested to Melville its application as a decongestant, as well as an anti-inflammatory agent. The decongestant application was developed in collaboration with Chas. Pfizer and Co., and marketed as a nose drop preparation under the trade name Tyzine™.<sup>38</sup> It then occurred to Melville that tetrahydrozoline might have ophthalmic application. This was largely because the present writer, then twelve years old, was experiencing serious eyelid irritation from swimming pool chemicals. With myself as principal clinical test subject, he formulated tetrahydrozoline into a standard lubricant eye drop formulation. He (and his wife, my mother Geraldine) thought the product might be successful in the marketplace because of the high level of eye irritation being experienced by Southern California residents at the time, owing to photochemical smog.<sup>39</sup> The concept interested drug manufacturer Chas. Pfizer and Co. with whom he was already working on the Tyzine product, and Pfizer brought the eye drops to



Visine™ eye drops—original packaging (author's collection)

market in 1959 as Visine™. Geraldine coined the slogan later employed by Pfizer marketing, “It gets the red out,” over the dinner table one night. Pfizer continued to market it until 2009, when its consumer product line (and accompanying trademark portfolio) was sold to Johnson and Johnson Inc. At least three other manufacturers now make an ophthalmic product essentially identical to original Visine, but not sold under that name.<sup>40</sup>

The final successful product to emerge from Sahyun Laboratories was Daricon™, chemically oxyphencyclimine.<sup>41</sup> It is an anticholinergic drug (interferes with the neurotransmitter acetylcholine) elaborated from the acetylcholine skeleton. This compound was marketed starting in 1958, also by Chas. Pfizer and Co., as an antispasmodic drug for the treatment of peptic ulcers and gastrointestinal spasms. It has been discontinued in the United States, as peptic ulcers are now treated with antibiotics, but it is still marketed worldwide for certain other applications.<sup>42</sup>

Melville Sahyun formally retired and closed his enterprise in 1973. He died in Santa Barbara in 1977 of cardiovascular complications. The blood thinners which might have prevented his heart attack were contraindicated based on his peptic ulcer. And ironically, Daricon™, the medication he developed for peptic ulcers, was contraindicated by his cardiovascular complications. It was, of course, not known until 1983 that peptic ulcers are the result of bacterial infection,<sup>43</sup> a piece of medical detective work that was recognized with the Nobel Prize. Had antibiotic treatment for the ulcer been available in 1977, Melville's cardiovascular symptoms would have been treatable; he would have enjoyed more years of life, and we would have enjoyed more years of his wisdom and generosity.

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*Melville R. V. "Mel" Sahyun is the son of the subject of this article. He grew up with his parents in Santa Barbara, where family history was an essential part of the family culture. His Ph.D. is in physical chemistry from UCLA. He was instrumental in the family's process of donating the Sahyun Library property to SBCGS, and is a Life Member of the Society. Mel has been researching his wife, Irene's, Irish roots and is working on a Sahyun Family History, in which this article will be a chapter.*

# Lost and Found

By Celeste Barber

**A**MONG THE DELIGHTS for family genealogists is that our ancestors, many distant in time, quickly become much more than names inscribed on headstones or listed on old federal census pages. We come to feel connected to them, often in deeply emotional ways. We are moved by their troubled or rich or adventuresome lives. They become REAL. When I think about my Revolutionary War ancestor, Thomas Gordon, and his mark – “X” – on a legal document. I am touched.

And then there is the rare discovery when an ancestor unexpectedly beckons to us, and we are blessed to care for them one last time.

Two years ago, I experienced such a connection through my husband’s aunt, Gail Coleman. She was a person I had never met, deceased over 25 years, and to be honest, she was not a priority in my genealogy research. My husband’s father, Leslie, came from a large family; he had ten siblings. Each of them had been born at Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara between 1894 and 1917. Of the ten, eight are buried in the Goleta Cemetery. I expected Ken’s aunt to be interred somewhere in San Bernardino County, since Gail and her second husband had lived in Ontario for many years right up until her death in 1995.

While researching Gail a bit further, I visited her *Find A Grave* page which read that she was buried at the Loma Vista Memorial Park, Fullerton, Orange County, California. This supported what Ken remembered about his aunt’s burial location. There was not an accompanying grave site photograph, so I put in a photo request to a *Find A Grave* volunteer. Within a week, the volunteer reported that Gail Coleman was not interred at Loma Vista. Hmmmm. I suppose I could have let it rest, but I felt that curiosity burr prodding me: Why would Loma Vista have been identified as her burial site? If not Loma Vista, WHERE?

Next, I submitted a death certificate request to the County of San Bernardino. There it was: “Place of Final Disposition: Loma Vista Mem. Park, 701 E. Bastanchury Rd. Fullerton, California.” We then searched online for Ken’s cousin, Raymond, (Aunt Gail’s son), to see what he knew. Raymond had been living in Texas for many years, including at the time of his mother’s death in 1995. He had no further information to offer other than his older sister, Muriel, had lived with their mother, but that Muriel had passed away in 1996.



Barber Family: Leslie, Charles, Gail, 1912



From *Find A Grave* website

Well, back to me! I wrote to the cemetery director who wrote back, not surprisingly, that no one by that name is buried at Loma Vista Memorial Park. I persisted, this time sending her a photocopy of the death certificate.

Good on her, though. She decided to check the lower storage room for unclaimed remains, and lickety-split, she found the urn containing Aunt Gail’s cremated remains. And it turns out, cemetery directors love happy endings. She was a pleasure to work with, bringing Aunt Gail home to her family.

The rest was easy: Meet with Rick Bower, the director of the Goleta Cemetery, to make preparations to inter her remains. Then, serve as the go-between for an ecstatic Raymond and the Loma Vista cemetery for authorization to transport the remains from Fullerton to Goleta. But the joy didn’t end there.

Rick Bower shared another discovery with us. As we were considering where to inter her among the eight gravesites within the family plot, Rick told us that a newborn had been buried in William Barber’s gravesite, Gail’s father and Ken’s grandfather. The infant, named

Charles Arbuckle Jr., lived two days. The baby boy was the first-born child of Gail and her first husband, Charles Arbuckle. No one in the family knew the sad story, including Raymond. The baby was born in 1932, three years after Gail’s father had passed away. At the time, it was not uncommon to bury infants in an adult’s grave and leave no marker.

Today, Gail Barber Coleman’s remains share the common grave with her father and her firstborn child; their gravesite is adjacent to her mother’s resting place. Surrounding them are five siblings and their spouses. Every grave is marked, so that we may remember. None are alone or forgotten.

*Celeste Barber taught English at Santa Barbara City College for twenty years, overseeing the Great Books program. Her colleagues nominated her for the California Hayward Award in Distinguished Teaching (2014). She is a past Santa Barbara County Woman of the Year, 4th District.*



# Dragged Kicking and Screaming into Genealogy

By Art Sylvester

**T**'WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT. The wind howled, the heavens scowled, the rain poured a flood, and diverse jetsam and flotsam floating down Foothill Road made driving like an obstacle course. But Diane was determined to scroll through some microfilms at the LDS Church in search of lost ancestors.

"Please come with me," she implored.

"On a night like this?" I responded. "you want me to drive you to the LDS Church through this grim El Nino storm merely to check out some genealogical hunches?!?"

"Yes," she replied sweetly.

"OK," I grumbled, "but I hope a flood doesn't carry us away."

It was a challenge to dodge fallen trees and floating logs on the drive, but we made it. Diane pulled the microfilms she wanted and went into the microfilm room, while I sat in a corner of the entry room and pouted.

After a half hour or so, she came out and asked me where my grandfather was born and lived.

"I don't know," I snapped without adding, "and I don't care,"

"Wasn't it in Maine?" she asked.

"Yeah, I suppose," I almost snarled.

"Didn't he ever mention a town?" Diane suggested.

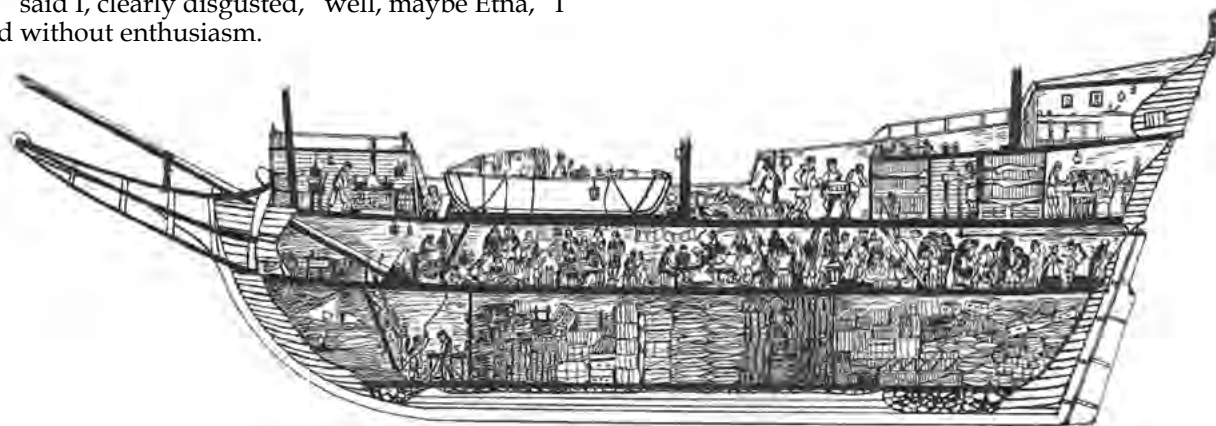
"No," said I, clearly disgusted, "well, maybe Etna," I retorted without enthusiasm.

Diane returned to the microfilm room and returned a few minutes later with a sheet of paper, and pointing to a line, asked, "Is this your grandfather?" The sheet of paper was the 1900 census for Etna, Maine. "Big deal," I thought to myself, but then I glanced at it more closely and Behold!! My grandfather had two sisters!! He lived with us for 12 years when I was in junior high and high school and never once mentioned that he had sisters. Who were they? Why didn't he ever talk about them? Were they black sheep, or was he? Were they some sort of family secret, or was he? And there in that census were his parents, my great-grandparents, whom I'd never heard of either.

I became hooked on family research that gloomy night. Now, 29 years later, not only do I know about my grandfather's four older sisters and his brother, but also the rest of our Sylvester ancestry back to Richard Silvester who, in 1630, emigrated from somewhere in England to the American colonies on the ship, *Mary and John*.

The research took me to villages in Maine where distant cousins walked me through cemeteries to view moss-covered gravestones of additional distant ancestors, and to see houses where some of them lived. I also traveled to southern England to learn about the maternal side of my family.

The microfilm copies of the Etna vital records to 1890 lacked an index and were so difficult to read that I subsequently teamed up with a fifth cousin in Maine to transcribe and publish them. I would transcribe them the best I could, then send my transcriptions to him to check against the original records in the Town Clerk's office. Now our published version with three generations of my family is the only extant hard copy, because shortly after our book was published, the original records disappeared.



*Mary and John 1630*

Ship Line Drawing - Sailing Ship Cross Section  
<https://www.nicepng.com/maxp/u2w7y3o0w7a9i1y3/>

*Arthur Sylvester is a past President and currently President pro-tem of the Society. He's retired but still working by writing and publishing popular books about the geology of Southern California. He also transcribed and published the Vital Records to 1892 of both Etna and Hampden, Maine.*



# It All Started with an Open House!

By Cathy Jordan

IT WAS 2009. I had retired a year earlier and had weeded out the closets in my house until I was cross-eyed. I was looking for something to keep my mind busy that would be fun and interesting in my retirement.

My mother made me aware of my family roots up to a point – that point being my great-grandparents on both sides of her family. My father simply said he didn't know much about his family at all, other than his mother and sister. Ironically, I have been able to find so much about dad's side of the family, but he is not around to share it with. My mother's side of the family was the one I was closest to growing up. I had five boy cousins, and my grandfather, known as "Gramps," on her Feely side. The Feelys are family I have written so much about. Then mom tantalized me with the fact that my grandfather's father came from Ireland. I didn't know too much else, dribs and drabs, picked up from overhearing conversations mostly.

That brings me to 2009, when I noticed the advertisement of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society's Open House. Up to this point I had never heard of them. I thought "why not?" I ventured out with just two questions to start with. I figured that if I could get close to answering them, then maybe this genealogy thing would be what I was looking for after all.

Those two questions were:

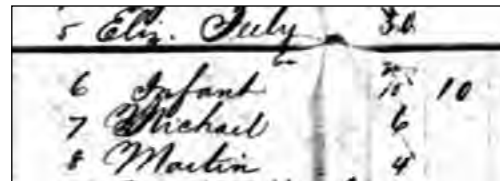
When did my great-grandfather come to the U.S. and how?

Who were the family called the Wensels that my grandaunt talked about so much? Were they friends or relatives?

I arrived at 316 Castillo Street, parked and went inside to the library as it was then, before the addition. I was greeted by so many smiling faces that I felt instantly welcome and not at all out of place. When I told them why I had come, they ushered me into the tiny computer room (now the ladies' room I think) and introduced me to Sue Ramsey who was sitting at a computer. I told her why I had come, and she immediately began typing, fast and furious. It took just minutes

and she printed out the ship's manifest list with my great-grandfather's name, his age, 6, his brother, who was 4, his infant sister, and his mother – names, dates, ship name – EVERYTHING! I was flabbergasted.

Then she went to work on the Wensels. She found them in censuses, and that led to the answer to my second question. Neely Wensel, the man's name I had heard so much, was the son of the sister of my great-grandmother! They were indeed relatives.



Elizabeth Feely and 3 children on ships list

All this magic happened in less than an hour, and in that length of time, I was completely hooked. Genealogy has since filled my retirement years with the fun of searching for answers to questions about my family as well as others I have helped, it has brought me a whole new group of great friends, and has kept my brain working. It has been the perfect combination for my computer skills, creative skills, and detective tendencies – sometimes called snoopiness. All due to an Open House!

*When not doing genealogy, Cathy's contributions to the library are: volunteer librarian, Ancestors West editor, past Membership Chair, currently membership support, member of the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, and she has taught a number of genealogy classes. Her retirement hours are full indeed!*



## FUN HISTORICAL FACT

THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA, AND SANTA FE RAILROAD'S entry into Southern California resulted in widespread economic growth and ignited a fervent rate war with the Southern Pacific Railroad; it also led to Los Angeles' well-documented real estate "Boom of the Eighties."<sup>[16]</sup> The Santa Fe Route led the way in passenger rate reductions (often referred to as "colonist fares") by, within a period of five months, lowering the price of a ticket from Kansas City, Missouri to Los Angeles from \$125 to \$15, and, on March 6, 1887 to a single dollar.<sup>[17]</sup>

From Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_rail\\_transportation\\_in\\_California#cite\\_ref-Duke\\_and\\_Kistler,\\_p.\\_32\\_17-0](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_rail_transportation_in_California#cite_ref-Duke_and_Kistler,_p._32_17-0)

# A Surprising Discovery on the Sahyun Shelves

By Teresa Fanucchi

**MUST START WITH A CONFESSION:** on many occasions over the years I listened to Kathie Morgan, former director of our own Sahyun Library, enthusiastically encourage us to come check out the print collection, and every time I would dismiss her invitation. “She’s not talking to me,” I thought. I had checked out the sections on Bakersfield and Kern County (where I was born and raised) and hadn’t found anything on my ancestors. I had stopped at that, certain that the library was for other researchers – those with roots in Santa Barbara, and that’s not me.

Then one day, after attending a lecture by family history professor Roger P. Minert, where he mentioned his book series, *German Immigrants in American Church Records*, and learning that the series is in our library, I was prompted to go in, excited by the possibility of discovering more details about my mom’s matrilineal side. While going to the volumes covering Wisconsin’s German Protestant churches, I quickly scanned the rest of the section covering the state of Wisconsin and one book caught my eye: a thick, dark brown yearbook-like tome with “Racine County” boldly written on the spine. We have relatives from there, I thought.

This book, entitled *The Grassroots History of Racine County*, copyrighted in 1978, was compiled by the Racine Historical Museum staff and includes “family, church, school, business and industrial histories,” largely written and submitted by residents of the county. Would there be anything about my ancestors, I wondered? I scanned the index for the surnames in my mom’s lineage that immediately came to mind: Haas, Hillger, Zabler...and there was a listing for Zabler. A quick turn to page 604 and huzzah! I was looking at a submission entitled “Zabler Family” which included Hulda Zabler, my great-great-grandmother on my maternal grandmother’s paternal side.

Admittedly, up to that point I had not spent much time researching her family line – most of my focus has been on my father’s Italian lineage – so I can’t say her ancestry represented a “brick wall.” However, no one in our immediate family knew any information about ancestors beyond Hulda’s generation.

The short essay, submitted by Wallace E. Zabler, a descendant of Hulda’s brother August, was a treasure trove of information. Within a minute of opening the book, I was reading about Hulda’s parents Carl and Hannah’s immigration to America (listed as occurring in 1868) with their seven children in tow. Their region of origin was listed as the village of Grossin in Schivelbein (then in Prussia; now a part of Poland). Per the essay the family bought “two parcels of land in Brighton Township and set up farming on the 130 acres (ninety acre and forty acre plots). They had plenty of help, five

of their children being boys. The oldest was 25 when they arrived.” The names, birth and death dates of Carl and Hannah and all seven children, as well as those of their spouses were also included.

Hulda went on to marry William Haas in Burlington, Racine County, Wisconsin, in 1876 and have four children, including my great-grandfather Henry, born in 1879. Henry Haas married Olga Hillger in 1907. The couple raised four children, including my grandmother Bertha Minnie Haas, born in 1914 in the town of Waterford in Racine County. Her middle name comes from her Aunt Minnie, her father’s sister.

I am grateful to Peggy Singer who donated *Grassroots History* to the Sahyun Library. I imagine she donated the book hoping it would serve as a resource for us researchers, and it has done just that. And many thanks to Kathie Morgan, for her ongoing positive insistence to check out the print collection. It’s true! You never know what you’ll find on those shelves.

Note: further research of primary documents would reveal the Zablers’ immigration date to be May 1869, not 1868 as stated in the essay. The editors of *The Grassroots History of Racine County* addressed the inevitability of inaccuracies in a publication of its type, offering an interesting perspective that could inform one’s approach to family history research: “It is apparent that happenings, even such recordable events as births, deaths, and marriages, are remembered in a fluid manner. Each event is perceived and remembered differently by various witnesses. It has been our intent and purpose to let the people of Racine County tell their history as they recall it. There will be discrepancies. So be it! What is history, but the interpretation of memories entwined with recorded statistics. Perhaps these varying accounts touch and jar the memory of readers, leading to a further search of the past in an attempt to sift and align new information to accent the old. Possibly it will mean discarding information once thought to be irrefutable. If *The Grassroots History* provides material for such creative activity in addition to interesting reading so much the better: our mutual goals have been achieved.”



Article author Teresa Fanucchi in the Sahyun Library holding *The Grassroots History of Racine County*

Teresa Fanucchi is a SBCGS member and has been working on her family history in fits and starts over the past 20 years. Highlights along the way: A trip to Salt Lake City to do research at the genealogy library with her mom; researching (with new-found

cousin Antonio) in the church archives of her ancestors’ village (Tassignano in Lucca, Tuscany).



# My Genealogy Journey with Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society

By Jean Foster

**T**HE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY Genealogical Society has been a social and educational journey for me. I started doing genealogy in about 1978. At that time there was no Internet, so it was going to libraries and the family history centers. I had joined genealogical societies in the areas where my family was from. It was in 1985 that I learned about our Society and their monthly meetings from a customer at the bank where I worked. I went to a meeting and was greeted by Jan Cloud, and I so enjoyed the meeting and the networking that I joined the Society that day.

We were meeting at the Goleta Community Center, and the books that the Society had were kept in cupboards in one of the classrooms. After the meeting, we would go into the classroom and for a couple of hours we would be able to use the books and work on our genealogy. The thing I found the most interesting about the Society was the friendliness of the members and their willingness to help you with your research. In the 1980s and 1990s we had several changes to our library and meeting places, but it was always growing and getting better. One of the things that I enjoyed was the monthly bus trips to the Family History Library in Los Angeles or the Los Angeles Public Library for a day of doing genealogy research. What fun it was to talk with your friends on the bus going and coming, but it was silent in the libraries; we were busy with our genealogy research. Everything was in books and on microfilm so you made the best use of your time.

In about 1990, computers were starting to be used for genealogy. The Society had a *Roots 3* user group that I joined when I got my first computer. My first genealogy program was on a DOS genealogy program, but I now use *Family Tree Maker*. Over time, more records were being digitized and put online and, with a dial-up modem, you could get records from home. It is hard to believe the early days of waiting for the mailman or going to a library for documents. Those days were fun, but so is finding that long-lost relative at 1 a.m., when you can't sleep.

I had to drop out of the Society in about 1996, as my parents needed my help. I moved back into my



Norma Johnson and Jean Foster at the Sahyun for an open house.

parents' home and my daughter and her family lived in my house. I was working part time and taking care of my parents, so there was not a lot of genealogy research going on. I did manage, with a cousin in Nebraska, to put together a book on our 2nd great-grandparents, James Wilson McCoy and Nancy Campbell McCoy. That was a three-year challenge.

I was able to get back into genealogy after my parents passed away, and to renew my friendship with Norma Johnson. We started going to classes at City College Adult Ed and I joined the Society again in 2013. We have the Sahyun Library now, which is a gem. I have become active as a coach, and coordinator for the Beginning Special Interest Group at our meetings. I am very grateful for all the Zoom classes and have been hosting a Beginning Zoom class monthly. As I learn more, I will be able to assist more with Zoom meetings and classes.

The Society has been a social and educational part of my genealogy journey and I thank all of you for taking me along for the ride. Congratulations on 50 years of success in helping us with this "hobby" called genealogy.

# The Unexpected

By Fred Schaeffer

SOON AFTER THE SANTA BARBARA County Genealogy Society moved into its current location, we were able to shelve our collection of books. It was then that Jan Cloud announced she would conduct a short class on library skills for a limited number of people. I thought I could use a refresher course on library research, so I signed up right away.

The class was a couple of hours for a few weeks. The very last thing she had us do was to go into the stacks and select three books off the shelves from areas that we had no ancestors from, then return to the classroom to report on our findings. I wasn't expecting to find anything concerning my family, and sure enough, the first two books revealed nothing. However, to my surprise, the third book turned out to be a treasure trove. It was published by the New Jersey Genealogy Society and had an entire chapter on the Landon family in New Jersey, all well documented.

Although I never knew my grandfathers on the Landon line, my mother had, so there were stories and photographs of my great-grandfather, Herman D. Landon, and my great-great-grandfather, John W. Landon. The chapter in this book ended with John W. Landon, who then lived in Canton, Bradford, County, Pennsylvania, and continued back for another four generations. John W. Landon's father was Levi D. Landon, his father was Laban Landon. Laban's father was William Landon, and his father was Daniel Landon who had lived in Connecticut. William moved his family from Connecticut to New Jersey where three of his sons served in the Revolutionary War. Laban served in General George Washington's Body Guards. All this information (sons, wives, and children) from a book off the shelf from an area of no interest. This I believe will be my best memory of Jan Cloud and the SBCGS Library. Jan encouraged us to cast our net a little wider when hitting a brick wall. This was one of those times, and the answer was right here in our library.

*Fred retired from General Motors after 30 years working in metrology. After retiring he completed a degree in archaeology at UCSB. He's always had an interest in family history and has been a member of SBCGS for a good number of years. Hobbies include gardening and reading, especially a good mystery novel. The common thread in all this is that he enjoys solving problems.*

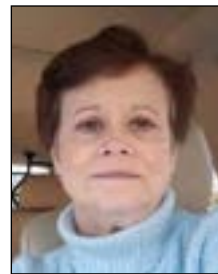


*The photo was taken at an archaeology site in Turkey.*

# How I Ended Up at SBCGS

By Robin McCarthy

WHEN I was retiring in 2012, people were asking me what I planned to do after I returned from a trip to Italy. For lack of any better ideas, I said genealogy. My mother's cousin, Jack Glenn, had told her they were related to John Glenn, the astronaut and senator from Ohio. Not having the benefit of his research, I thought that it would be something interesting to explore.



In September that year I enrolled in Louise Matz's genealogy class through Adult Ed. I was dumbstruck to learn how many old, old records were still in existence, not to mention available online. I was hooked. Louise gave the class a tour of the Sahyun Library for one of her sessions.

Family History Month was just around the corner and the Society was offering several classes that I was interested in attending. In those days, classes cost \$10 each for non-members. I decided it was cheaper to join the Society than to pay for each class.

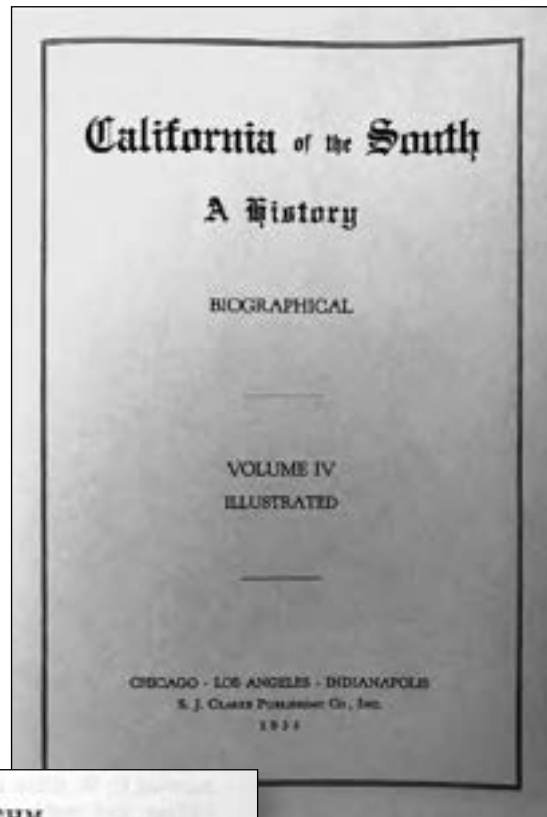
By February of the following year, Connie Burns had recruited me to be a volunteer librarian. A few months later, I happened to mention to Rosa Avolio how much I enjoyed using Excel. She said the Society had transcribed "a few mortuary books" in Excel that needed some fine tuning so the spreadsheets could be uploaded to a new database. "A few mortuary books" evolved into obituaries, marriage records, coroner's inquests, and so much more. And the rest, as they say, is history. We now have more than 225,000 records in the database with more to be added in an improved database on our new website coming soon.

My relation to John Glenn is still a mystery waiting to be solved someday, when I'm not adding to the database, collecting volunteer hours, working at the library, or co-hosting a Zoom event.

# In Praise of Librarians

By Sharon Summer

EARLY IN MY QUEST to find out more about my family's history, I started with my great-grandfather, William Knickrehm. I had heard there was a book published in 1933 that included a biography of him but did not know how to find it. Being a member of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society, I went to the Sahyun Library where Library Director Kathie Morgan helped me. She led me over to one of the computers where we first looked to see if our library had the book. When we did not find it, we looked on the website called *WorldCat*, which said a copy of the book was located at the nearby University of California at Santa Barbara Library. So, I went to the Special Collections Department at the university. A librarian there located the book and gave it to me to peruse. The book was about prominent people of Los Angeles in the 1920s and early 1930s. In it I found my great-grandfather's two-page biography. I could hardly wait to return to the Sahyun Library and share my thrilling find with Kathie Morgan. She was as excited as I was. I am so thankful that she helped me locate the book which gave lots of information about him, William Knickrehm, and made me feel so proud of his life and accomplishments.



## WILLIAM KNICKREHM

A pioneer and leader in the housemoving business in Los Angeles, William Knickrehm first came to the city in 1882 and at once engaged in business. He rented his first home at 567 San Pedro street but later moved to Broadway, near the place where Walker's department store stands. For more than a half century, he was to be an active factor in the city's progress and development. Born in Beckeburg, Germany, August 2, 1863, he was a son of Carl and Caroline (Meyer) Knickrehm, who came to America in 1871, locating at Elgin, Illinois, where the father operated a small farm and worked at his trade of shoemaker. Both parents died there.

William Knickrehm attended the Elgin public schools for a time, but received most of his education by reading good books. He learned the trade of bricklayer and followed that upon his arrival in Los Angeles. However, he soon turned to housemoving, as he could see a wide field for that business in the rapidly growing city. He became a leader in his field, employing as many as sixty people in rush times. In 1925 he retired to look after personal interests and to enjoy home life. He had purchased a house, which he moved to 762 East



*Sharon Diane Knickrehm Summer enjoys multiple aspects of genealogy. Among them she likes doing research, writing articles and vignettes for her memoir, creating pages for her family history books, and learning more about the history of the world in the process.*



## Ancestors West Sponsorship 2022

**W**e wish to thank the following members of the Santa Barbara County Genealogy Society for their contributions, which greatly help to defray the publication costs of **Ancestors West!**

**Julie Moore, Cathy Jordan, Carol Andreasen, and Cherie Bonazzola**

If you wish to contribute, please make checks payable to SBCGS and mail to SBCGS, 316 Castillo St. Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Please note on the check that you are an **Ancestors West** Sponsor. Or use the website [sbgen.org](http://sbgen.org) to use a credit card.

# Sahyun Library Extension, 2010–2011

By Art Sylvestre

**M**AJOR ENDEAVORS REQUIRE VISION, planning, execution, and then celebration. A new 2,000-square-foot addition to, and renovation of, the original 50-year-old pharmaceutical laboratory was always a dream of Society members, even from the day the Sahyun family donated the 1.5-acre campus to the Society in 1998.

But the Navajos say before you can weave a rug, you have to build a loom. So, Gary Jensen drew a set of plans, shepherded them through the City's Historic Landmarks and Planning Commissions, and then recommended contractor Tony Suhrer to do the work.



Tony Suhrer

We interviewed Tony at the Sahyun Library on a day of pouring rain when one of the downspouts was overflowing. At one point during the conversation, Tony got up, went outside, fixed the downspout, and returned, all without saying a word. I thought to myself, "This is the fellow I want to work with."

Our project had to pass several pre-construction inspections, including a soils test, an archeology test, a historic landmarks test, and a tsunami inundation test. A test well was on the property to monitor infiltration of gasoline from leaking underground tanks on the adjacent corner lot. It was located in the middle of the driveway between the Victorian and the old building. The well passed its inspection but had to be abandoned and filled with concrete before construction could commence.

Jan Cloud and Michol Colgan headed a committee to raise the one million dollars needed for the project. Later, Bob Bason joined, a little dubious that it could be done, especially then, at the height of the 2008 recession. But Jan, Michol, and Bob persevered, and the bankers in town were astonished. More than 95 percent of the funds derived from generosity of Society members.

A tree prized by the Sahyun family, the Cherry of the Rio Grande, stood about where the northeast corner of what was to become the library's stacks. A pit was dug around the tree, a six-foot-square box was constructed around the tree's root system. The tree was allowed to sit in the box for six weeks, then a giant crane gently picked up the tree and its box and placed them into a pre-dug hole where the tree presently resides.

A big, nine-foot-square block of concrete was uncovered during grading for the site. Our best guess from early photos is that it probably capped Ellwood Cooper's original water well when the property was his nursery prior to 1900.

The soils test revealed the possibility of liquefaction of the ground beneath the library extension in the event of an earthquake, so we were obliged to call in a foundation engineer to design a boxwork foundation that would resist liquefaction.



Gary Jensen designed the foundation and wall framework to support a second story if the day ever came that we would like to do that.

Construction began on the library extension at the same time the original building was undergoing extensive renovation. Tony Suhrer had a very competent gang of sub-contractors that took care of framing, electricity, plumbing, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), drywall, masonry, and roofing. Eventually the old building was conjoined with the new extension.



Framing stages of the library extension.



Installation of red tile roofing.

The City's Historic Landmarks Commission decreed that the exterior brickwork on the new wing must match the brickwork on the old building. We intended to do that anyway, but we had not counted on having to have a local ironworks custom build window frames to match the old ones, which were not standard size.

One major task was to make the project a library and not just a building, so a gang of 34 member volunteers built several hundred feet of new bookshelves. They cut oak-veneered plywood sheets according to plans originally drawn by John Woodward and updated by Gary Jensen. They sanded, stained, assembled, and erected

the bookcases that we admire and enjoy today. Cabinet makers believe our volunteers probably saved the Society more than \$60,000 by constructing and erecting the bookcases ourselves.



Willie Quinn, masonry sub-contractor, building a jacket of concrete blocks around the exterior walls of the new library extension.



Society stalwart volunteers take a breather (l-r, Bob McMillin, Fred Schaeffer, Paul Cochet, John DuBois, and supervisor Jim Friestad).



Bookcase construction supervisor Jim Friestad applying stain to one of the bookcase plywood panels.



Volunteers prepare bookshelf panels for sanding.



A few of the 34 society volunteers sand and stain bookcase panels.





Installation of carpet in what would become the computer lab, the reading room, and the stack room.

We were close to finishing construction when we ordered and had the carpet laid. By then, everything began to look like a library, not just a construction site.



Library Director, Kathie Morgan, shelving books in new bookcases according to a pre-determined numbered scheme.



Sahyun Library extension project principals (l to r): Art Sylvester, project manager; Tony Suhrer, contractor (Madera Construction); Cheryl Jensen, landscape architect; Jim Fries-tad, bookcase construction supervisor; Gary Jensen, project architect (Archart).



Celebration of the completion of the new Sahyun Library extension. City of Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider joins First District County Supervisor Salud Carbajal and SBCGS President-Elect Bob Bason in a light moment prior to using those big scissors in the Mayor's hands to cut that red ribbon.



The SBCGS Board of Directors helps Mayor Helene Schneider cut that red ribbon for the newly renovated Sahyun Library!



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# The Streets Near the Sahyun Library

Excerpted from *Street Names of Santa Barbara* by SBCGS member, Neal Graffy

## Castillo Street

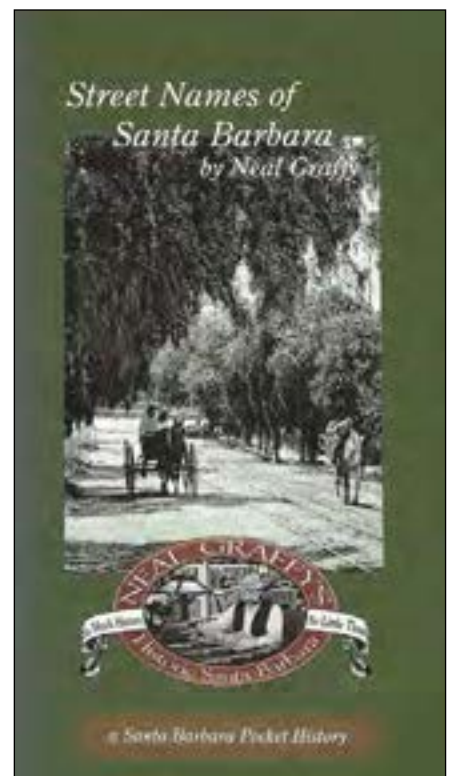
A CASTILLO CAN BE A CASTLE or just a fortification. Qualifying for the latter definition, in the early 1800s a *castillo* was carved into the edge of the cliff overlooking and protecting the anchorage at West Beach. Though nearly a quarter mile away, Castillo Street was named as it was the closest street to the little fort. Below the *castillo*, a large rock outcropping known as Castle Rock rose above the surf, and, though for many years a great tourist attraction, it was removed during the breakwater construction in the late 1920s. The site of the *castillo* was erased by the extension of Cabrillo Boulevard past Castillo in the early 1940s.



1922 Waterfront



Neal Graffy is Santa Barbara historian, lecturer, author and researcher. He is a long-time member of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society. He took advantage of his isolation during Covid to organize, inventory and file his archive of Santa Barbarania, working to complete his long-awaited manuscript of the history of the Great Santa Barbara Earthquake while also co-working on a new book "Ortega Ridge," the third in the Santa Barbara History Mystery series. His current books - Santa Barbara Then & Now, Street Names of Santa Barbara, A Murder at the Potter Hotel, and An Unfortunate Incident at Castle Rock (the latter two being the first and second in the Santa Barbara History Mystery series) are all available at the Sahyun Library Book Nook.





## Book Review

# What to do with unwanted heirlooms, treasures and research?

Book Review by Sharon Summer

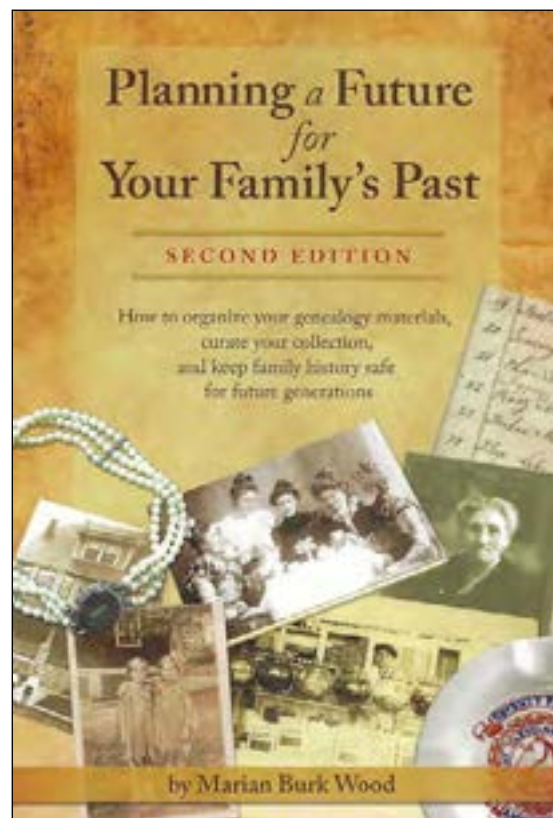
*Planning a Future for Your Family's Past*  
How to organize your genealogy materials, curate your collection, and keep family history safe for future generations

Author: Marian Burk Woods  
Published: September, 2021  
Paperback, 97 pages

**T**HIS LITTLE GEM OF A BOOK offers useful ideas about how we can preserve our family's history. Genealogy research can lead us to develop a rich knowledge of our family going back many generations. We collect many documents that substantiate our findings about the lives of our ancestors, and possibly have written stories about their lives and times in which they lived. In this way we honor our forebearers. Perhaps we have family heirlooms passed down through generations, photographs from earlier times such as cabinet cards.

What do we do if no one in our family wants all our research and heirlooms or has no room for them? What if family members are only willing to take a few things out of the wealth of precious information that our investigations have produced? Will it all disappear when we are no more? This brief idea-filled book can help avoid that tragic loss.

As the author says, "Old family photos, ancestor stories, genealogical documents, and heirlooms reflect your family's past – and they should be safeguarded for tomorrow's descendants and researchers." So, you can use the multitude of excellent ideas in this book to help you preserve your family's past.



### Among Ms Wood's ideas are:

- **WRITE** out instructions for the future of your collection. (I recently did this and my brother said he appreciated having my thoughts written down.)
- **SHARE** your family history now. For example, give away one piece of the china or one place-setting of the silverware.
- **GIVE** bite-sized bits of history, such as making a booklet for a gift, telling little stories at each family visit, going on a field trip with a loved one, perhaps to the old family home where your great-grandparents lived.
- **DIGITIZE** old photos for safekeeping and then share them with a caption or story. Captions tell who the people were, including names and dates, as possible.
- **PUT** original photos into an archival sleeves to protect them and to mark out their importance.
- **THINK** about who might like to have the old photo or who you would like to have them, maybe a descendent of someone pictured.
- **LABEL** heirloom items with a little information saying who it once belonged to, how you are related, and anything else you know about the family treasure. (For instance, I got archival tags to put on pieces my grandmother told me were from her grandmother.)

These and many more suggestions are compiled in this little volume.

*Editor's Note: The author of this book was the speaker at our Zoom June 2021 monthly meeting, and YES, the book is available for sale at the Sahyun Library.*

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



1972 to 2022

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

*Golden Anniversary*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Luncheon

Sunday, November 13, 2022

Noon to 4 pm

Santa Barbara Carriage Museum

*Celebrating 50 Years of  
Finding Family & Friends*

**YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS UNFORGETTABLE EVENT!**

“In September, SBCGS member, John C. Woodward will be awarded the prestigious **Griswold Award for Philanthropy** by **Santa Barbara Beautiful**, an annual award that recognizes a Santa Barbara citizen for their philanthropy that has contributed significantly to the beauty and well being of Santa Barbara.”

Santa Barbara *Beautiful*

**CONGRATULATIONS JOHN** on reception of the **Griswold Award for Philanthropy**, with most grateful appreciation for your munificence, wise counsel, and steadfast support of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society and Sahyun Library over many years.

Sincerely, the Officers, Board of Directors, and Members - past and present - of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society as we celebrate 50 years of helping the Santa Barbara community find their family



# Author Guidelines - *Ancestors West*

Updated February 2022

**A**RTICLES FOR *ANCESTORS WEST* focus on useful genealogy or research sources, helpful research strategies, compelling historical accounts, and interesting case studies. The items represent the mutual interests of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society membership. Each issue follows one or more themes that are meant to draw together a selection of content within the journal; submissions are not limited to the themes, however.

## Manuscripts

Suggested length is from 250 to 2500 words. Longer pieces or serial pieces are also published. Submit your document in Word format if possible. If not, please submit in text format. Endnotes are recommended, especially for books, articles and websites. Please follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* and the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* for usage.

*Ancestors West* reserves the right to edit and revise submissions as necessary for clarity, substance, conciseness, style, and length prior to publication.

## Images

Any piece is enhanced by images. Please provide images if you can to support your piece. The images in general must be over **1 MB, and preferably over 2 MB, with good quality resolution (300 dpi)**—clear and sharp to the naked eye when printed at a reasonable size (e.g., 3" x 4" - plus). Please include a caption for each picture, a photo credit or source, and insert the caption in the location in the document where it should appear. **The images must be sent as separate files and not included within a Word file.**

## Author information

Provide one or two sentences about the author(s) along with author(s) photo.

## Deadlines

Submissions with images are due the **1st of the month in February, May, and August, and October 15** for the November Issue. Address submissions to Kristin Ingalls, [antkap@cox.net](mailto:antkap@cox.net)

## Contributor copies

Authors and other special contributors receive a printed copy of the issue by mail. This is in addition to the copy you receive as a member of the Society. In addition, *Ancestors West* encourages contributors (and other interested readers) to share articles online via social media, email, etc. The entire back catalog of *Ancestors West*, all the way up through the current version, is available online, and text inside the journals can be located in *Google* searches that originate outside the [sbgen.org](http://sbgen.org) website.

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The 7th century BCE Library of Ashurbanipal wikipedia

**THE LIBRARY CONCEPT DATES BACK MILLENNIA.**

The first systematically organized library was established in the 7th century BCE by Assyrian ruler Ashurbanipal in Nineveh, in contemporary Iraq. It contained approximately 30,000 cuneiform tablets assembled by topic. Many of the works were archival documents and scholarly texts, but there were also works of literature,

including the ancient *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Like many bibliophiles, Ashurbanipal was very protective of his library. An inscription in one of the texts warns that potential thieves would face the wrath of the gods. *Ency Brittanica*

Vaughan, Don. "A Brief History of Libraries". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Invalid Date, <https://www.britannica.com/story/a-brief-history-of-libraries>. Accessed 24 July 2022.