



Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society and the Sahyun Genealogical Library

Researching the World

March 2026

Tree Tips Newsletter

Vol. 42, No. 3

WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY PROGRAM

Featuring Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew,
Professional Researcher and Genealogical Educator

Live in person on
SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST
9:30 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

at the Sahyun Genealogical Library
316 Cabrillo, Santa Barbara

“FamilySearch: What’s New and Different for 2026”

Speaker: Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew



- Explore what’s new and different in **FamilySearch** for 2026,
- Discover how **AI Research Assistant** and **Full Text Search** can accelerate your research, uncover hidden records, and streamline your workflow.
- Take a look at **FamilySearch Experiments** to see what’s coming next.
- Review key announcements from **RootsTech** to stay ahead of the curve.

Schedule:

- Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments and informal discussions with the Society’s Special Interest Groups (in-person only)
- A short business meeting begins at 10:30 a.m.
- Jamie’s presentation is at 11:00 a.m.

Parking:

Parking is available at the Sahyun, but, if you are able, please park on the street or at the Carriage Museum, 129 Castillo. If you are arriving early and staying late, please park “in the slot.” There will be a volunteer at the Sahyun parking area, so if you have trouble, please let them know. (We do encourage car pooling!)

PLEASE REGISTER

**Choose how you want to attend:
Join Jaime Live In-Person at the Sahyun
Genealogical Library
or on Zoom
sbgen.org or**

<https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!event/2026/3/21/monthly-meeting>



March is Women’s History Month

This month, why not do some research in the library on one of your female ancestors? Whether your ancestor was a pioneer, in the military, a writer of diaries, a factory worker, a head of household, or perhaps hard to find, she may have left her mark in the history of a county or state, an organization, or a movement and be represented in our library.

A simple title search on the word “women” in our online catalog returned 73 items, many first person accounts. Here is a sampling of some intriguing works:

Women’s voices from the Oregon Trail: the times that tried women’s souls, and a guide to women’s history along the Oregon Trail

Women Patriots in the American Revolution: Stories of Bravery, Daring, Compassion
Women and the law of property in early America

Married to a Daughter of the Land: Spanish-Mexican Women and Interethnic Marriage in California, 1820-1880

The Hidden Half of the Family, A sourcebook for Women’s Genealogy

Claiming Their Land, Women Homesteaders in Texas

(Submitted by Laurie Hannah, Librarian)



President's Message by Marie Sue Parsons



Oh my! Yesterday was the first day of the month, March 1st... which means that my column is late to Diane once again for Tree Tips. And it was also one of my volunteer days at the library—every first Sunday of the month. I love my volunteer library time, but March sure sneaked up on

me this year! Where did February go? And whose bright idea was it for the month to only have 28 days? I'm not ready yet for March!

History says that the Romans believed that even numbers were unlucky, so many early Roman months should have had either 29 or 31 days. But in order to reach the then 355-day year, one of them had to have an unlucky even number. February was chosen to be the unlucky one with only 28 days.

The lunar calendar at the time of the early Romans had only ten months. Beginning in March, and ending in December. The time between December and March was considered unimportant because it had nothing to do with harvest.

But the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, wanted to make the calendar line up better with the actual 12-month lunar year. So the year needed two more months to make a twelve month year... And an extra day was needed because each lunar year actually had 365 plus 1/4 days. That extra full day needed to be added every fourth year to avoid the 1/4 day. So we now still have a 29 day February every four years. If you were born on February 29th you would be considered LUCKY because your month is now an uneven month.

But for me, I'd feel that it's UNlucky... because I'd miss all those birthday celebrations! s your birthday February 29th? Do you feel lucky to only have a birthday celebration every four years? Do you have any ancestors born on February 29th? f so, how and when do you think they might have celebrated their birthday, if they did such a thing? For me, I'm glad that mine is in July, considered a lucky odd numbered month!

Happy birthday to all those other lucky 31 day month March birthday members! Hopefully I'll see you celebrating in the library!

Marie Sue



More to Celebrate in March Classes and Interest Groups

*For more information and to register,
please check the Website Calendar,*

<https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!/calendar>

Ancestry.com Follow-Up Zoom Class

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

5:30–6:30 PM

Zoom Only

Instructor: Chris Klukkert

Following her January presentation, Utilizing Ancestry.com with Tips, Tricks & Tree Tactics, Chris will offer a one-hour Zoom follow-up session for those who would like to go deeper. This class will provide time to revisit key strategies, explore additional features, and answer your questions as you apply these methods to your own research. Bring your curiosity—and your tree!



Writers' Group Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 10:00 - 11:00 am

Zoom Only

Moderator: Sharon Summer

Come for a helpful discussion of genealogy writing. Hear ideas from members, their ideas and tips. Find inspiration for your own writing. Share some of your writing for encouraging feedback. Part of this month's hour we plan to share our childhood mud pie stories! Did you make mud pies?



On-Demand Webinars. SBCGS Members, take advantage of free On-Demand Webinars created by Thomas MacEntee! They are 45-60 minutes long with real-world examples, step-by-step how-tos, and a downloadable, detailed PDF handout for each session. One new webinar by Thomas MacEntree will be added quarterly to maintain year-round fresh content. Sign in and then click on On-Demand Webinars:

<https://sbgen.org/membership-welcome-page/>

DID YOU KNOW that . . .

by Mary Jacob



Each year, the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society proudly opens our property to support the Food From the Heart harvest program, allowing volunteers to gather fresh fruit for those in need. This past year alone, they harvested 120 pounds of persimmons from our trees.

In 2025, Food From the Heart collected more than 64,500 pounds of fruit throughout the community. Of that total, 40% was distributed directly to their clients, 25% was donated to the Foodbank, and 35% supported other nonprofit organizations serving those in need, including the Organic Soup Kitchen, Unity Shoppe, and many others.

Like our own Society, the Harvest Program is powered entirely by dedicated volunteers. We are honored to play a small part in helping nourish our community.

Zoom Meeting Updates

Robin McCarthy

To help keep our meetings safe and enjoyable for everyone, the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society has updated a few Zoom security settings. We'll continue to review and adjust these as needed.

Our programs are intended for personal genealogy learning and enjoyment. To respect our speakers and fellow members, please do not record, screen-capture, share, transcribe, or summarize meeting content — including through AI tools.

Please note that some browser extensions or apps (such as Otter.ai, Notta.ai, Read.ai, and Fireflies.ai, etc.) may automatically record or transcribe meetings. If you use any tools like these and are unsure of their settings, we kindly ask that you disable them before joining.

For everyone's security, we also ask that you join the meeting with your camera on and your full name displayed. After greeting the group, you are welcome to turn your camera off if you prefer.

If you anticipate needing a camera exception — for example, if you're joining by phone, don't have a camera available, or are not feeling well — please email Robin McCarthy (rpubgen04@cox.net) in advance so we can let the moderator know before the meeting begins.

Thank you for helping us maintain a welcoming and respectful learning environment for all!

Irish Research

March is full of holidays, events, and days of remembrance. Among them are Women's History Month, Daylight Saving Time, RootsTech, National Puppy Day, National Plant a Flower Day to name just a few. And, of course, **St. Patrick's Day is on March 17th**. If you have Irish ancestors, this could be a good time to do a bit of research in our Sahyun Library. There are over 40 Irish genealogy resources on our shelves including these:

Aspects of Irish Genealogy: Proceedings of the 1st Irish Genealogical Congress, Gorry, Paul, Call Number: 941.5 D27 GOR

Basic Guide to Irish Records for Family History
Mitchell, Brian, Call Number: 941.5 D27 MIT

The Book of Irish Families Great and Small
O'Laughlin, Michael C., Call Number: 941.5 D27 OLA

Clan Callaghan : the O Callaghan Family of County Cork
O'Callaghan, Joseph F., Call Number: 929.2 CALLAGHAN OCA

Directory of Irish Genealogy, 1990
Divelina Publications, Call Number: 941.5 A3 DIV

The Famine Immigrants, Lists Of Irish Immigrants Arriving At The Port Of New York, Vol. III, 1846-1851
Glazier, Ira A. Call Number: 941.5 W3 GLA v. 3

Finding Your Irish Ancestors : Unique Aspects of Irish Genealogy
Mitchell, Brian, Call Number: 941.5 D27 MIT

Finding Your Irish Ancestors in New York City
Buggy, Joseph, Call Number: 974.7 NEW YORK D27 BUG

Genealogist's Handbook for Irish Research
Daly, Marie E., Call Number: 941.5 D27 DAL

Trip to Salt Lake City

Kate Lima, Organizer

Our society will once again visit the FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City. We'll head over for the week of May 3-10, 2026. We will stay at a new hotel since the Plaza has been demolished: The Radisson. I hope you can join us for the entire week or for a shorter time if necessary. Log into the Radisson's reservation site, or call the Radisson directly (801-531-7500) and let them know you're booking with the Santa Barbara Genealogy Society. The discount price is \$149 per night. Don't forget to email me at limakate1@gmail.com so I can put you on our list. I hope you can join us!



Volunteer of the Month

Michel Nellis

SBCGS

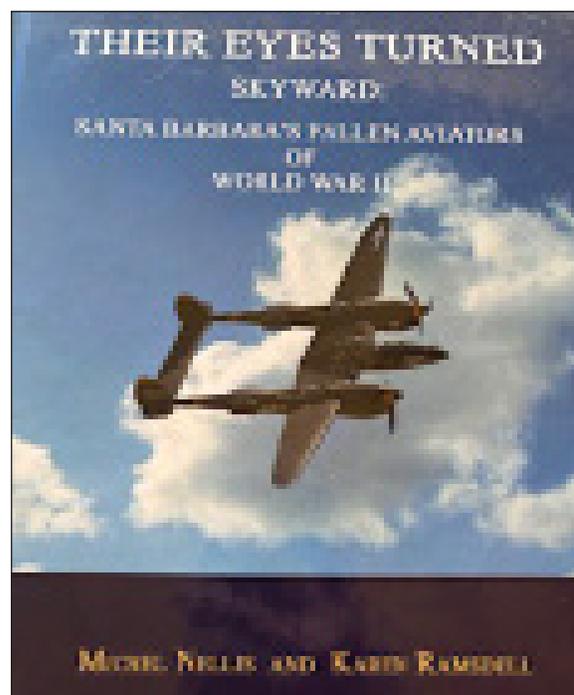
Presents:

March
Volunteer
of the
Month:
Michel
Nellis



Board Member + Budget and Finance Committee Chair

SBCGS member of 40+ years, world traveler, author, and expert researcher- learn more about Michel in the caption and in our March issue of Tree Tips!



We are so excited to present our March Volunteer of the Month- Michel Nellis!

Michel is one of our long-timers and life members- she's been with our Society for over 40 years! Michel came across genealogy through a serendipitous interaction that led her down her very first family history rabbit hole. Michel says, "My curiosity then brought me to the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society where I made new friends, and discovered the desire to always learn." (Want the details of that serendipitous interaction? Go to *** for the full story!)

This passion inspired Michel to go back to school in her forties to earn a Master's Degree in Public Historical Studies with an emphasis on business and community history. This work led her to becoming an author, where she has penned *A Profile of Downtown Isla Vista* and *With Their Eyes Turned Skyward: Santa Barbara's Fallen Aviators of World War II* with our very own Karen Ramsdell. She is currently working with another author on writing a detailed account of local legends the de la Guerra family- stay tuned!

Michel is instrumental in our Society in a variety of ways- including working with Dorothy Oxnard to develop the Picnic in the Cemetery event; working on the committee to find our current home at the Sahyun Library; chairing the Finance Committee for 25+ years; and currently working with the Programs/Education committee on making our monthly meetings educational and memorable.

Thank you for everything you do, Michel! Our appreciation for you is endless.

Submitted by Caroline McCarty, Social Media

***"When I was a teenager, I heard we were related to the "great Confederate General Stonewall Jackson." Really? But I had no proof.

Then in the mid-1970s, I had a client at my desk for whom I was filling out tax forms. He was a geology professor at UCSB and his wife was a genealogist. "What is that?" I asked him. I had never heard of that profession. He explained that a genealogist is someone who traces family histories. That intrigued me so I made a date to meet his wife, Jan Cloud, the genealogist.

I told her the story I had heard growing up – that I was related to Stonewall Jackson. She told me about the Wyle's collection in Special Collections at UCSB and likely there would be information about the general there. So off I went. Yes, I found research about Stonewall and eventually concluded he was not my ancestor. I can't say I was disappointed, but I can say I fell in love with genealogy research and discovery, well before the internet."

SBCGS Leadership Board & Operations Updates

Your Society's leadership is committed to advancing our mission and serving our members. The Board of Directors provides strategic direction, while the Operations Leadership Team oversees programming, services, and daily operations.

To stay informed, visit the **Members Section** at sbgen.org. Once logged in, navigate to **Member Resources** to access the latest **Board Minutes and Operations Leadership Notes**.

Membership Spotlight

Kathryn Field, Membership Chair



Winter 2026 Member Orientation (l to r); Holly Snyder; Michele Martin; Barbara Barker; Tamara Skov; Susan; Danielle Clayton; Gage Ricard; Kathy Cremeen; Kate Lima. Not pictured: William Noack.

NEW MEMBERS in February:

George Bustillos
Barbara Barker
Alan (Scott) Turnbull
Suzanne Spillman
Amber Smith
Irene Cottom Cooke

MEMBER ORIENTATION

Six new members attended Member Orientation on February 22. As part of the session, Kate Lima gave the history and a tour of Sahyun Library; Kathy Cremeen described the coaching program; Holly Snyder gave an overview of Outreach activities; and Rosa Avolio pointed out online resources. Members also enjoyed refreshments and played a competitive round of Genealogy Bingo.

Volunteers: As well as coordinating the helpful coaches, **Kathy Cremeen** is now our Volunteer Coordinator. Please contact Kathy at kajcremeen@gmail.com if you need a coach, wish to become a coach, or wish to volunteer. There are volunteer opportunities in all areas of our genealogy society.

Genealogy Tip of the Month:

Genealogy Tip of the Day



Libraries, archives, and historical societies do acquire new materials, digitize items that “you never thought they would,” or create new indexes or finding aids. If it’s been years since you looked at their catalog, viewed their website, or inquired about their collection, it might be time to

do so. There may be something there that was not when you originally checked. By Michael John Neill, March 31, 2022

VENUE SURVEY

Your thoughts on where to hold future monthly meetings are needed! Please check your email for the link to a short survey on whether to continue at Sahyun Library, return to First Presbyterian Church, or try another meeting location.

More Than Just Books

by Chris Klukkert, Book Chair

When we think of coming to the Sahyun Library, most of us picture research — digging into a county history, checking a reference guide, or chasing down that elusive ancestor.

But the Sahyun offers so much more than shelves of books. It is, quite simply, a gathering place for people who share your passion. There is something energizing about working alongside fellow genealogists — comparing notes, sharing discoveries, or even asking, “Have you ever run into this before?” More often than not, someone nearby has — and is happy to help.

Our volunteer librarians bring a wide range of experience and specialties. On any given day you might find someone well-versed in Mexican research, another comfortable with New England town records, and yet another who can walk you through a tricky citation question. That kind of collective wisdom is hard to duplicate at home.

And speaking of tools — don’t forget our scanning and digital equipment. You can digitize photos, preserve documents, and even scan pages from books in our collection for your personal research files. It’s a wonderful way to bring the library home with you.

You may also notice the non-genealogy books on the table near the office — generously donated by members and available to borrow and enjoy at your leisure. After all, genealogists tend to share more than just research interests!

Then there is the kitchen. Coffee, tea, and snacks are available (and purchasing them helps support the health and growth of our library). From time to time, members bring in home-grown fruit or special treats — sometimes even from our properties own trees. And if you happen to arrive on a day when Kathie Morgan’s lemon cookies appear, consider yourself especially fortunate.

Yes, the Sahyun Library is a place for serious research. But it is also a place for conversation, camaraderie, shared curiosity, and community. If you haven’t visited in a while, or if you’ve been meaning to explore our book collection more fully, please do come in. You may find exactly the resource you need .. and a few friendly faces waiting to greet you. Come for the records. Stay for the community.

Here are the books from the New In The Library Shelf:

Roots in Early America by our own Cheryl Fitzsimmons Jensen
Around Switzerland in 80 maps
Exploring Norwegian Genealogy
Bozeman and Gallatin Valley (Montana)
Creating Family Archives: Saving your memories
Early Settlers oi the Poor Fork of the Cumberland River, Harlem County, Kentucky & Adjoining Counties
Marriages of Rhea County, Tennessee
The Jews of Chicago
Historical sketch of Bruton Church Williamsburg, Virginia
An Atlas of settlement between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi-Missouri Valleys 1760-1880.

We want to thank the following generous donors:

Janet Mitchell Jim Friestad Holly Snyder Katherine Collins Sharon Henning Cheryl Jensen Bob Goeller Gary Gensler William Noack Tina Hammond Nancy Ward Snyder and the Genealogy Society of Santa Cruz



**SAN DIEGO
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SOCIETY**
EST. 1946



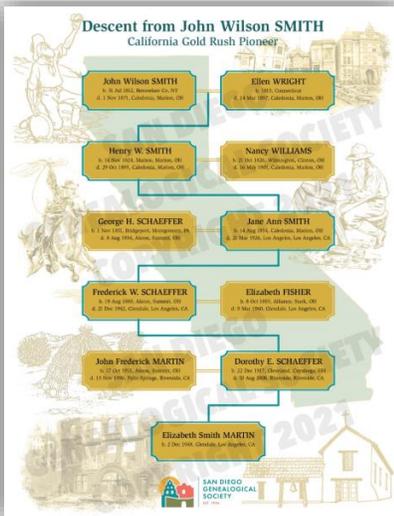
San Diego Genealogical Society Launches California Pioneer Certificate Program

Date: May 2023

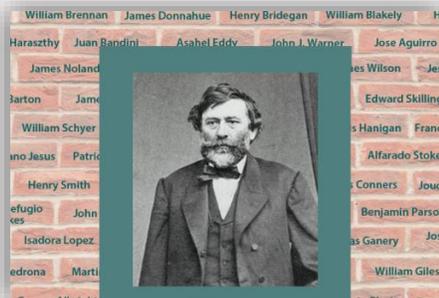
Contact: Colin Whitney, SDGS Educational Programs,
pioneercertificateprogram@gmail.com



California Pioneer Certificate



Lineage Chart



California Pioneer Certificate

The San Diego Genealogical Society presents the California Pioneer Certificate Program honoring early pioneers who helped shape the state of California. The program is designed to assist those researching their California roots and issue formal acknowledgment of their ancestors to the development of California.

On the SDGS website, the California Pioneer Honor Wall was created to highlight the contribution early pioneers made to the development of California. Here, entry portals provide organized access to a searchable database containing more than 400,000 eligible California pioneers, along with biographical, genealogical, and historical information. The database consolidates pertinent records to aid research and is continually updated as new information becomes available. Additional genealogical and historical resources and finding aids are also provided. Each brick in the Honor Wall contains eligible pioneers' names and includes photos, biographies, and events.

Those interested in recognizing their descent from early California pioneers are encouraged to complete an application. Supporting documentation submitted must show their ancestor was associated with one or more of the four following California historical events:

- California's Admission of Statehood (1850)
- The Gold Rush (1848-1860)
- The San Francisco earthquake (1906)
- California Mission period (before 1850)

Upon verification of submitted documentation, applicants will be issued a Certificate of Authenticity and Lineage Chart showing the pioneer's relationship to the applicant.

Membership to the San Diego Genealogy Society is not required to participate in this certificate program. The application and instructions are available in the Member Resources section of the SBCGS website.

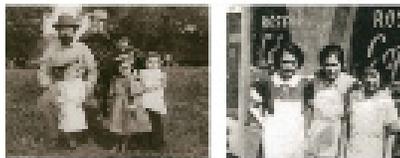
Outreach

by Holly Snyder, Chair



Santa Barbara Hispanic Family Histories, 1850-1970 Exhibit

View our exhibit online at <https://sbgen.org/santa-barbara-hispanic-family-history-exhibit/>! It is available in English and Spanish.



****If you visit the exhibit at Sahyun Library, please be sure to fill out our survey located at our front desk. This is a requirement for our California Humanities grant and it provides us with great feedback for future exhibits.****



Join our new **Hispanic Genealogy Special Interest Group!** Anyone who is researching Hispanic ancestry or who wishes to learn more about this topic is welcome to participate. Next meeting will be at Sahyun Library on Saturday, March 21 at 9:30 AM (before the general meeting). Please contact Yolanda Pérez (3yperez@gmail.com) for further information.

This project is made possible with support from the Santa Barbara Foundation and California Humanities, a non-profit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Visit www.calhum.org.



Picnic in the Cemetery (October 24, 2026)

Save the date! **Picnic in the Cemetery** event will take place October 24. We are in the final stage of approval with the **Calvary Cemetery**. We will make an announcement when it's been fully approved! If you would like to help with planning this fun event let us know! Email Holly at Outreach@SBGen.org.



Speaking Engagements in the Community

The Outreach Committee is looking for more opportunities to spread the word about SBCGS. If you belong to a club, organization, or retirement community who have program speakers, please suggest us! They can request a speaker thru our website under "In the Community" (direct link: <https://sbgen.org/in-the-community/reservation-request/>), or email Outreach@SBGen.org and we will send an introductory description of the program and how to request a talk. All talks can be tailored to the group's interests and skill level!

Local Historical Library and Museum Tours

We are planning to schedule some tours with local historical libraries and museums for our members. Tours will be scheduled at the Santa Ynez Historical Museum, Carpinteria Valley Museum of History, Santa Barbara Mission Archives Library, Santa Barbara Historical Museum and Gledhill Library, and more! We will make an announcement for our next tour soon!

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."

Bringing Community Activism and Genealogy Together: An Interview with Mary Robles By Mary Hancock



Introduction: Mary Robles, a member of SBCGS since 2023, shared her family history in SBCGS's "Santa Barbara Hispanic Family Histories" exhibit while also serving on the exhibit's Steering Committee. She was brought up in Santa Barbara and, while achieving success as a small business owner, has also served as a volunteer in numerous civic and philanthropic arenas. Recently, she sat down with Mary Hancock, one of the exhibit co-chairs, to reflect on her life's journey, and on the ways that volunteerism and community engagement have been threaded through that journey.

Interview:

Mary Hancock [MH]: To set the stage for our conversation, can you tell us a bit more about your early life and upbringing?

Mary Robles [MR]: Although I've lived in Santa Barbara all my life, I was born in Los Angeles. My mom attended Woodbury University and was scheduled to take her final exams when I came along. After I was born, my grandfather picked us up and brought us to Santa Barbara. After that, my mom went back to LA to finish her studies. She returned to Santa Barbara later in 1953 and was offered two jobs, one at the Bank of America and the other at the airport. She picked the bank job and worked for Bank of America until her retirement. Banking offered women a good career path and she was able to climb to the top and was a bank manager at the time she retired.

We lived on Brinkerhoff Avenue in a house that my mom's family owned. It was where she had been brought up with her two brothers. Some other family members also had houses in that neighborhood. Although my grandfather hadn't wanted to own property, a few of my aunts persuaded him to buy the house on Brinkerhoff. The Dennison family sold the house to my grandfather for \$2000 in 1942; they also owned the Redwood Inn and offered to sell that to him, too. Because he didn't like stairs, he said no to that. That house stayed in our family and was passed on to my mother and, after she passed, to my sister. My uncles always appreciated my mom being there for our grandmother and thought that she deserved to inherit the property. By that time, we also had an additional property on Mason Street, which I inherited from my mother and where I live now.

The Brinkerhoff neighborhood was a great place to grow up. We could walk to the beach and there were baseball games and activities at Laguna Park. It was a very nice area. That was before the 101 freeway tried to come in. In fact, that was my first activity being political, giving flyers out so that they wouldn't put the freeway there. It was my first start in putting out petitions and it just went on from there!

MH: You said that you lived close to other family members as you were growing up. What was that like?

MR: Because my mom was divorced, I didn't have a dad growing up. But I had two uncles and so they were my dads. One was a teacher and the other was an engineer. Most weekends we spent with family, which meant cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents. That's how the older generation had been raised, together with cousins, and so that's how we were raised. We spoke English at

our house because we had been born here and attended grammar school here. The reason that my sister and I could speak Spanish was because we wanted to be able to speak to our grandparents and aunts. That was really great for us, to have bilingual skills. Many of my cousins didn't speak Spanish.

MH: You've said that volunteerism and giving back to the community have been important parts of your life and the lives of your parents and grandparents. How were these activities and values nurtured as you were growing up?

MR: I have had mentors all my life who were wonderful. It started early, at Wilson school, which I began attending in fourth grade after starting at Lincoln. Most of the students at Wilson were immigrants or children of immigrants. Our principal, Frank Van Schaick, was great and he became very well-known. [<https://www.independent.com/2006/06/29/frank-van-schaick-aka-ol-van-1911-2006/>] He taught us how to be well-rounded people. One time I asked him, "When dignitaries come or we have to be on TV, why do you always send me?" He goes, "You know why? Because you're shy, but I know that you can do it. And I know that you'd be a good public speaker if you had the opportunity." I guess if he thought someone should be a writer, he would have just put them in there, so they would have to do it. He knew where we all belonged and encouraged us. So, that was me, I became a public speaker. That way, I met a lot of people. I think that that's where it started, with Mr. Van Schaick. He and his brother, who was a principal at Franklin School, used to take groups of us up to Rattlesnake Canyon for weekend camping trips. How would I have ever gone camping? My mom was a banker, she couldn't take us and my uncles worked. Because of the principal and his brother, we learned a whole different world. It was the kind of thing that people might do in the Boy or Girl Scouts, but we didn't have those organizations at our schools then.

I am a shy person and in junior high I didn't do much outside school but, later I became active in the Democratic party groups here. I did a lot of canvassing. This was in high school and, when I was in college, my political science teacher suggested that I try to be one of the convention delegates for the 1972 presidential election. He said, "I bet you'd have a good chance." I thought about it and decided that I would do it. Shirley Chisholm was in the race and I was a delegate for her. I knew that she would not be nominated, but I wanted my first vote to go to her.

When I went to UCSB, students had to do work-study. Most of the Latino kids worked at La Casa de la Raza or at the schools. I worked at the Women's Center at UCSB because I was encour-

aged by the Dean of Women. She goes, "I'm literally asking you, can you run it?" I go, "I'm only 18, I don't know how." She said that they hadn't yet found a permanent director, but needed someone to hold the fort. So I would go, every morning to open it, and between classes, I would be there to welcome people. You see, I always lucked out into these jobs. I did that for two years, until I transferred to UC Irvine. I've always had these fortunate mentors, who I learned from. They gave me opportunities.

MH: Can you tell me more about the types of work you've done?

MR: I always wanted to go into retail. In fact, I worked as a manager and buyer in Newport Beach, while I attended UC Irvine. After I graduated and returned to Santa Barbara, I was able to work with antique dealers, helping them in merchandising and buying. We still had that house on Brinkerhoff and by then two neighbors had opened antique stores. So I thought I'll do that, and I did. I started my store, Mary's on the Avenue, in that house in 1980 and continued until 1992. There were probably about eight antique stores then, but in a few years, the stores covered the whole block. It was great because the people who had stores and businesses also lived on Brinkerhoff. We were neighbors and business owners together and we created a good cooperative community.



MH: It sounds as though your interests in volunteerism may have spilled over into your work as a business owner.

MR: Yes, it did. Here on Milpas, where I live now, I work to improve the Milpas business district. Back then, on Brinkerhoff, we had something like that. We pooled our money for advertising; we did our advertising together and our literature for marketing looked gorgeous. We really had it nailed. We paid the trolley to come through on its route. We were being written up in national publications, like Sunset Magazine and the New York Times. At Christmas, local politicians and community leaders would come to our Christmas festival. We'd close the street for that. We did something similar four times per year for other events. We had quilt shows and set up temporary booths for independent dealers to sell their items. This brought more buyers into our shops, too. It was a great concept. The store owners on Brinkerhoff were like another family.

I closed my store in 1992. For one thing, the business was changing with online sales just starting to get a foothold. But also, my grandmother needed me more. I was doing a lot of decorating at that point, so I would go to people's homes and provide decorating services and would take my grandmother with me, but it was hard to keep that up. My mother said, 'I'll work and you

take care of Grandma." It was tough, but it had to be done. My grandma already was doing a lot of volunteering and community work at that point, so I became her partner. That's how I got more involved with helping seniors, by joining her at places like Real Help and the Friendship Center. This led to me becoming one of the founders of LEON (Latino Elders Outreach Network), which I'm very proud of, and to work with the senior service nonprofits.

MH: What did you and your grandmother do? Can you tell me more about that?

MR: Grandma Tillie started volunteering with a senior nutrition program in the 70s. They had had trouble getting people interested so they asked my grandma to help canvas homes. So, Grandma got people to go to this nutrition program. And because her son, Tony Cardona, was working at city schools, she got him to introduce it to the supervisors who funded it.

It was through her volunteer work that she met Ted Ackerman, who became her second husband. They got to know each other by hanging out together at the public library. I remember that my friend who worked at the library told me, "You know that your grandmother has a boyfriend?" I didn't believe it, but she insisted because she saw Ted and Grandma together. They were only together for two years before he passed, but he loved that he had married into a big family.

My grandma also volunteered at Real Help, even to the age of 99. That's how I got into Senior Programs of Santa Barbara. When they got an endowment, I was invited to join that group and later, with proceeds from the organization's property sale, we were able to fund the Senior Programs Santa Barbara at the Santa Barbara Foundation. My work with the Senior Expo also came out of this. Here in Santa Barbara, people become closely connected through work and civic life. I think that it shows the immigrant spirit, and the patriotism of immigrants. Once they were here, they were patriots. My cousins and uncles enlisted in the military voluntarily because of that. People don't think of that as the motivation for immigrants, but it's there. Once he became a citizen, my grandfather never missed voting in an election and neither did anyone in our home. They went through stuff and experienced some prejudice, like when they were turned away from rentals, but it didn't diminish their patriotism.

MH: So, you've been a full-time volunteer for over thirty years?

MR: Yes, in fact I spend more time volunteering than I would for a full-time job! And I still do neighborhood politics, like the Milpas EastSide Business Association. We find funds for the Christmas lights. Everyone assumes that the city does it, but it doesn't and it's quite expensive. We also meet with police and city officials to communicate peoples' concerns. Our primary concern is the welfare of the Eastside population.

MH: You were a prime mover in helping us realize the Hispanic Family History exhibit. What inspires you to learn about genealogy? What do you want younger generations to learn from it?

MR: I was excited to get information out about how the Hispanic population started businesses and established themselves. There are multi-generational businesses and families make important contributions. You can see the legacy of the family elders in the streets and buildings. People worked and tried to build neighborhoods and to share their successes. It doesn't all come down the golden ladder, it comes down in attitudes, to be open-minded and

to help other people. It's not all for money. Good things come out.

I've always been interested in genealogy, always have been. I've always listened to the stories. That's why I'm writing them down, because not everybody remembers. I remember when I would hear things about when my mom and other elders were young. There's one friend who used to take dance classes, then he would go to my grandmother's or cousins' houses and teach everyone how to dance. How cool is that story?

We all have these little stories that we want to share and that help us remember our elders. My aunt, Mariana Uribe Topete, came in 1915 from Jalisco, Mexico, with her husband. She was the first in our family to cross and we always toast her for coming here to Santa Barbara. She had sacrifices in her life. Her son Nick volunteered for military service in WWII and was killed. But she still loved this country and this town. Other cousins also volunteered and two, Jimmie and Samuel Escobar, lost their lives. These are all important stories that are passed on by elders like Tia Mariana, as well as other teachers, like those in school and at the public library. All of these are teachers who are ready to give information. The younger generations should listen to what they have to say. They might have an answer for you. You have to be open to listen to all of the good information that comes from the heart.