



Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society and the Sahyun Genealogical Library

Researching the World

September 2026

Tree Tips Newsletter

Vol. 42, No. 8

“Open the Vault: Four Local Archives and How to Use Them”

Saturday, September 19, 2026

9:30 am to 12:00 Noon

**Location: Trinity Lutheran Church
909 N. La Cumbre Road, Santa Barbara**

The Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society invites you and the public to its free monthly meeting on Saturday, September 19, 2026, featuring a panel of four local archivists who “open the vaults” of their respective collections and share tips on using their archives for genealogy research.

“Open the Vault” Panelists:

- **Chris S. Ervin**, Archivist, Gledhill Library, Santa Barbara Historical Museum. The Gledhill Library holds over 40 collections on Santa Barbara County, California, and Western American history.
- **Clara Lum**, Archivist, Santa Ynez Valley Historical Museum & Parks-Janeway Carriage House. The museum preserves historical objects, photographs, documents, and ephemera reflecting the region’s diverse cultures.
- **Dez Alaniz**, Director, Presidio Research Center, Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation. The center holds collections on local history, archaeology, and historic preservation.
- **Fr. Jack Clark Robinson**, O.F.M., Ph.D., Executive Director, Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library. Founded in 1967, the archive holds primary documents, sacramental registers, and rare photographs on the Franciscan missions, Indigenous populations, and California’s settlement.

Schedule:

- *Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for refreshments and informal discussions with the Society’s Special Interest Group topics from beginning genealogy to writing family histories*
- *Brief business meeting begins at 10:30 a.m.*
- *The presentation is at 11:00 a.m.*

**Virtual attendance via Zoom is available with
advance registration at
<https://tinyurl.com/mr45xpbm>**



September Calendar

Please RSVP when required.

[https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/
calendar/#!calendar](https://sbgen.org/meetings-classes/calendar/#!calendar)

**250th Anniversary Heritage Quilts
Display**

Open now through October
Jackson Room at the Sahyun

The Genealogy Do-Over
Wednesday, September 9, 2026
5:30 - 7:00 pm

Webinar Watch Party
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
In-Person Only
1:30- 3:30 pm
Sahyun Genealogical Library
Moderator: Rosa Avolio

Writers’ Group Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 2026,
10:00 am
Zoom Only
Host: Sharon Summer

SBCGS Monthly Meeting
Saturday, Sept 19, 2026
9:30 - 12:00 Noon
**In-Person at Trinity Church
and on Zoom**
Topic: Open the Vault: Four Local
Archives and How to Use them

**California Pioneer Certificate Pro-
gram Workshop**
Tuesday, September 22, 2026
7:00 pm
Zoom Only

Researching with AI Workshop
Zoom Only
September 24, 2026
1:30 pm
Moderator: Robin McCarthy

Save the Date
Introduction to the Sutro Library
Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026, 11:00 am
Learn about the Sutro Library and its
collection of resources covering all
49 US States and some international
locations.

President's Message

by Kate Lima



Welcome back after a dark August. I know many spent the month vacationing, in faraway places as well as their own backyards. Staycations are sometimes the best. I wanted to spend August organizing all the research I found in Indiana. Well, that's like saying I want to run the Boston Marathon. I could try, but I'd never finish.

I did try, and I did accomplish a little bit. Most importantly I remembered the time spent with my dear friend, driving through beautiful Indiana, trying restaurants, hanging out in libraries. I got lots of great research done, but time with Anneliese filled my heart with a joy that settled in deep. I carry that with me every day.

Time with friends is a definite plus when visiting the Sahyun. Though the society was "dark" last month and we had no classes or general meeting, the library was open. I took on extra shifts for fellow volunteers, which meant meeting more people, those I know and new ones as well. A great perk this past month? Air conditioning! Being in the library meant doing research and volunteer work while staying as cool as a cucumber. Consider a trip to the library when the heat rises. You'll be comfortable and you'll get some work done!

Property News

Something's missing at the Sahyun: our groundskeeper! Chase Cahoon and his family moved out of the Victorian last month; they're heading to Wyoming where housing is affordable and there's lots of open land. I know I'll miss seeing Chase around the property, wearing his big hat and even bigger smile. The committee is upgrading the old home, which Chase and Aliana rented for the past year or so. They also need to find someone to keep our property looking beautiful. Our lives certainly don't stay stagnant, and though I'm sad to see the family go, I'm excited for them to start their next adventure.

National Archives - Closures

I'd like to share a letter I wrote to NARA regarding closure of the National Archives in San Bruno (near San Francisco) and Chicago. These closures will severely limit access to irreplaceable and undigitized historical records. It's a sad day for genealogists, archaeologists and researchers of all types. I hope some grass root efforts will change things. You'll find my letter here to the right..

Kate Lima, President

Kate's Letter to NARA

August 3, 2026

Edward Forst

Acting Archivist of the United States

National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road

College Park, MD 20740-6001

Dear Mr. Forst:

On behalf of the Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society, we write to oppose NARA's June 23, 2026, announcement of its intent to close the National Archives at Chicago and San Bruno.

These regional facilities hold records — U.S. district and appellate court files, Army Corps of Engineers records, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Immigration and Naturalization Service files, and hundreds of other agency collections — that exist almost exclusively in paper form and are not duplicated in Washington, D.C. For genealogists and family historians, these are often the only source documenting citizenship, military service, land ownership, pensions, and treaty rights. Consolidating this material at a storage-only site with no research space would functionally end public access to it for two of the nation's largest metropolitan regions and for Illinois and California as a whole.

We are equally concerned about the loss of staff expertise. Archivists at Chicago and San Bruno carry institutional knowledge — what remains uncatalogued, how holdings connect to related collections elsewhere — that cannot be transferred or replaced, and that researchers depend on for successful work.

As the nation marks its 250th anniversary this year, we urge NARA to preserve on-site holdings and in-person research access at both facilities rather than dispersing them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kate Lima, President

Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society

More Information from ConferenceKeeper.org

NARA CHICAGO

A couple of weeks ago I shared a link to keep up with news and info about upcoming NARA closures. [SaveOurNationalArchives.org](https://www.saveournationalarchives.org) does focus more on the San Francisco Bruno archives, so I am pleased to share info sent to me from CAGGNI (Computer Assisted Genealogy Group of Northern Illinois), about a similar website focusing on Chicago NARA closure, hosted by the [Chicago Area Archivists](https://www.chicagoarchivists.org). The site includes detailed information on how and who to contact, as well as press releases and news about the NARA closures. <https://www.chicagoarchivists.org/NARAClosuresAction>

More Than Just Books

by Chris Klukkert, Book Chair



I've just returned from beautiful Sweden and now need to catch up on all the library "doings" that took place while I was gone. I hear that an organizing "bunny" has been hard at work at Sahyun, gathering up some of our many loose ends and whipping things into shape. I'm looking forward to seeing what has been accomplished!

Of course, even on vacation, I never seem to get very far away from genealogy.

My sister-in-law brought out three old family photo albums assembled by my husband's farfar (paternal grandfather), along with a diary containing all sorts of family information and wonderfully fact-filled newspaper obituaries—in Swedish, of course. What a gold mine!

I was able to photograph and scan everything, and I came home with weeks—probably months!—of enjoyable work ahead of me as I identify people and upload photographs and information to the Ancestry tree I maintain for my husband's Swedish family.

And you know what? When I come across Swedish words I don't know, need to pinpoint a place, or want to check a date or historical detail, we have some marvelous Swedish genealogy reference books right in our library that I can pull off the shelf and consult anytime. How handy is that?

Best of all, I have already connected with other Swedish researchers working on some of these same family lines. They are thrilled to see the photographs and information I am adding, and in return, they are helping me fill in some of my blanks.

That is one of the things I love most about genealogy: when research becomes cooperative. One person has a photograph. Someone else has a date, a name, a story, or a missing branch. Put it all together, share what we know, and suddenly our ancestors become just a little more complete.

So much for taking a vacation from genealogy!

And coming up next month, remember—it's Family History Month, with all sorts of exciting meetings, classes, and "doings." Keep your eye out for those!

Meanwhile, I'll be back at Sahyun Library soon, catching up on what everyone else have been doing while I was away. I know Chris Galley has been busy, because there are quite a few newly cataloged gems you'll want to check out. Take a look at the newly published Upstate New York book, along with all the wonderful Santa Barbara-related additions.

It is, as they say, a plethora of goodies!

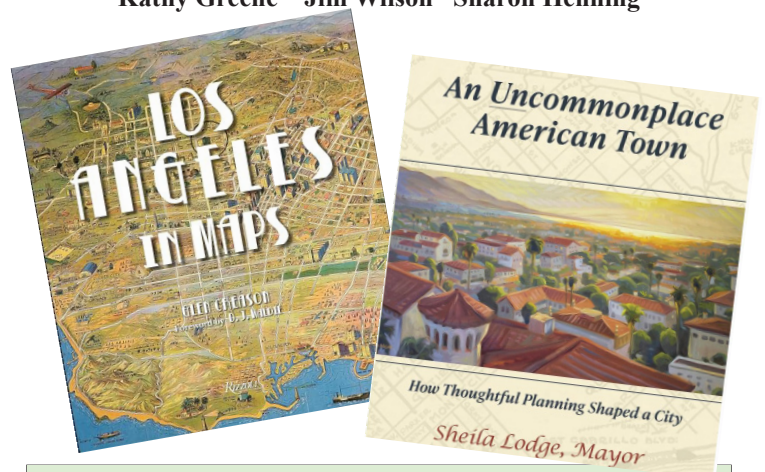
Come on in! We look forward to seeing many of you at Sahyun—and hearing what you discovered this summer.

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

NSG Researching in Upstate New York (with some new updated state-wide content)
The Civil War at Rosehill (Chicago, Illinois)
Tennessee Land Grants: Surnames H-HZ
Los Angeles in Maps
Santa Barbara: An Uncommon place America Town: How Thoughtful Planning Shaped a City (Sheila Lodge)
Santa Barbara Community Life: A Monthly Pictorial Magazine
State Of California 1852 Census, Santa Barbara County
Terminal Island: Lost Communities on America's Edge.
Wheeling, (West Virginia): An Illustrated History
Marriage Records of Augusta County, Virginia (2 vols.)

We want to thank the following generous donors:

Santa Ynez Historical & Carriage Museum
Kathy Greene Jim Wilson Sharon Henning



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."

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**.

Due October 15 Then and Now

Compare the lives of ancestors with those of current generations.

We are happy to accept any stories related to genealogy!

*Please send to Charmien Carrier, editor
charmien2940@gmail.com*

- *Communication*
- *Travel*
- *Food*
- *Child-rearing*
- *Education*
- *Courtship & marriage*
- *Work*
- *Money*
- *Medicine*
- *Entertainment*
- *Holidays*
- *Home life*

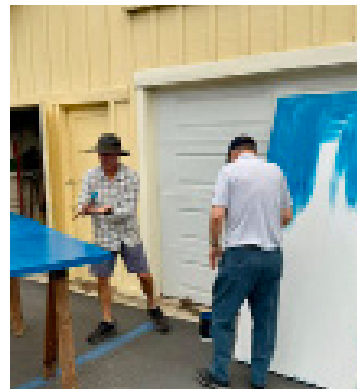
Volunteering - Extremely Helpful and Amazingly Fun



On July 25, longtime Society members and volunteers **Bob Muller and Cheryl Jensen** led 21 UC Master Gardeners on a tour of the Sahyun Library gardens, as part of required continuing education for the gardeners. They were impressed with the variety of plants and unusual trees. Bob and Cheryl serve on the Property Committee of SBCGS, and have been instrumental in developing the landscaping at Sahyun.



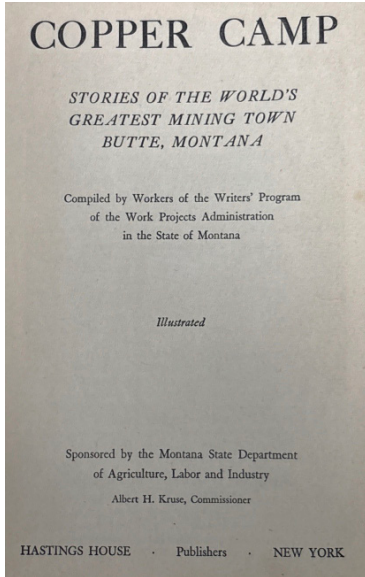
Volunteers **Tom Chard and Fred Marsh** painting the doors to our storage sheds in August 2026.



Book Reviews — From the Shelves of the Sahyun

by Pat Caird

Copper Camp Stories of the World's Greatest Mining Town Butte, Montana



Published in 1943, this book was compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration. Known as the WPA, it was created in 1935 during the Great Depression to put millions of people to work, among them writers. The Preface credits the book to Bill Burke, "a crack publicity man, news writer and a native son of Copper Camp," although named and unnamed writers also contributed.

Thirty-six short essays chronicle the rise of Butte "capturing oral histories, local lore, immigrant cultures and the rough-and-tumble lifestyle on 'the richest hill on earth'." There isn't a topic you would want to miss.

What I love most is the way the stories are told. Covering the familiar themes of a town's history, each section has its own twist and a sense of the absurdity that made me laugh. A few chapter titles give the flavor: "Butte the Bizarre," "Shacks, Shanties and Mansions," "Brickbats on Election Day," "Cabbages and Kings," "Crazy Over Horses," "Girls of the Line," "Naming of the Mines," "Men of the Mines," "Fabulous Females," and "Play-Boys."

Some of Butte's suburbs were called Nanny Goat Hill, Seldom Seen, Chicken Flats and Butchertown. Some saloons were named The Alley Cat, Bucket of Blood, Frozen Inn, The Cesspool, Graveyard, and Pick and Shovel. Names of both men and women were equally as creative. You can get an idea of the character of Butte.

In 1884 there were "more than 300 mines, 4,000 location notices posted on the hills surrounding copper camp, 5,000 miners, wood choppers, and teamsters making the wheels turn for the huge mine machine." Payrolls amounted to \$600,000 a month. Gold, silver, and copper were mined with almost a quarter of the world's copper supplying the world.

You can only imagine what it took to make the place work, both above ground and underground, and this book is not short on descriptions of any part of life in Butte.

There are photographs, acknowledgements, a Chronology of Events and Dates from 1856 – 1941, and an extensive index.

It is simply a great read!

Burke's acknowledges his sources, has illustrations, a Chronology of Events and Dates, Butte Montana, from 1856 – 1941, and an extensive index.

Outreach 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@SB-Gen.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!

Workshop Classes Resume

Our Genealogy Do-Over and Researching with AI workshops are back in session this September. Enrolled students will receive a reminder email with the Zoom link prior to class.

- Wednesday, September 9th at 5:30 pm PDT – The Genealogy Do-Over Workshop will go over classmates' work and questions from Step 5, then move into an overview of Step 6.
- Thursday, September 24th at 1:00 pm PDT – The Researching with AI Workshop will review Chapter 4 homework, followed by a presentation on Using AI for Locality Research (Chapter 5 of the workbook).

Monthly California Pioneer Certificate Program Workshops continue on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7 pm PDT, hosted by Colin Whitney from the San Diego Genealogical Society. Visit the calendar event to register on Zoom. See the flyer at the end of this newsletter for more details about this certificate program.

Membership Spotlight

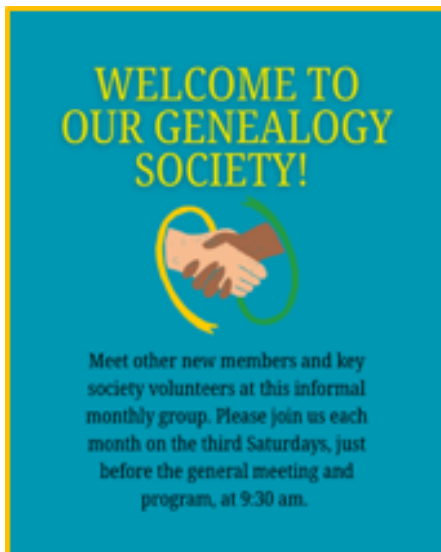
Kathryn Field, Membership Chair

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

NEW MEMBERS in July and August:

Suzanne Werner
Hazel Johns
Cherie Baroni
Alexandra Nalevanko
Peter Tannenbaum
Ruth Morrison
Cathy Oliverson
Kathryn Richardson
Charles Churchill Read

Please help me in welcoming this summer's new members.
Erma Flynn also joined us as a returning member.



Thank you to our four new Lifetime Members. At \$1,000, this is a deal for anyone planning to stay with us for 26 years or more! More importantly, these generous donors make it possible to offer more resources to our members and guests today. Thanks, also, to the longtime members who have upgraded their memberships to the Patron, Donor, or Friend level.

Between 9:30-10:30 am at each General Meeting -- before the business meeting begins -- new members can get to know each other and meet key volunteers in the Society. Those who've been in the society for less than a year are encouraged to stop by this table and learn from other members.

As always, new members may **find packets under the Members' Area of our SBCGS website**. After signing in, find Membership Packet on the Member Resources page. There are also packets at the library to pick up.

Volunteers: As well as coordinating the helpful coaches, Kathy Cremen 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. A recently-updated list of coaches is available.

There are volunteer opportunities in all areas of our genealogy society. At this time, we are in particular need of people with financial, A/V and technology experience. And if anyone would like to organize a benefit yard sale, please contact me.

Scam Alert

A few members have reported receiving suspicious emails, disguised as being from an SBCGS official, and asking for money in the form of gift cards or bank transfers. Please do not respond to these emails, and let a Board member know if this happens to you. Members will never be asked to pay an urgent invoice from their own funds on behalf of the Society. We have a very robust payment system with checks and balances.

Genealogy
Tip
of the
Day



by Michael John Neill
on August 31, 2019

Genealogy Tip of the Month

Explain terms in your notes that may not be clear to someone else later. "Grandma worked out as a young girl," and when they bought their farm in the late 1930s it was on the 'hard road.' Grandma was not going to the gym when she "worked out" and most farms in the 1930s where they lived were not on paved roads—it was a big deal at the time.

She called it the "slab" too. Grandma babysat me when I was small and she'd warn me not to go out near the "slab." My children had no idea what I meant. It was the state highway that ran in front of Grandma's house.

Always make certain your terminology is clear and make certain that you understand terms in old records and newspapers that might not mean today what they did then.



Writers' Group
Zoom Only
Led by Sharon Summer
Wednesday,
September 16, 2026
at 10 am, via Zoom

Join us to talk about future writing projects. Hear what everyone has been writing over the summer. We'd love to listen to some of your writing. We can offer encouraging comments, foster inspiration, and you might hear a useful tip.

Outreach

by Holly Snyder, Chair



Picnic in the Cemetery Carpinteria Cemetery October 24, 2026 10:30 am

Actors are set and cemetery residents have been chosen! This highly attended event will be held at the Carpinteria Cemetery with lunch following in the gazebo at the cemetery. It will be a true Picnic in the Cemetery! Registration will be open at the beginning of October.

Volunteers needed! We will need help with:

- Tour guides
- Set up and take down: check-in table, signs, and chairs at visiting tour site locations (few at each location)
- Check-in table at the cemetery
- Lunch tickets

If you would like to volunteer at this fun and highly attended event let us know! Email Holly at Outreach@SBGen.org

View our past cemetery events here: <https://sbgen.org/in-the-community/attend-an-event/>



Santa Barbara Hispanic Family Histories, 1850-1970 Exhibit

**Santa Barbara Public Library
Special Event on First Thursday
October 1, 2026, 4 - 7:00 pm**

Genealogy lookup and treats available!

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

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 Trinity Church on Saturday, September 19 at 9:30 AM (before the general meeting). Please contact Yolanda Pérez (3yperez@gmail.com) for further information.

Community Events

Stop by and say hello! We will be participating in one community event this month and then two next month. We are in need of a couple of volunteers for the Asian American Neighborhood Festival, which is a well-attended event. See below for more information.

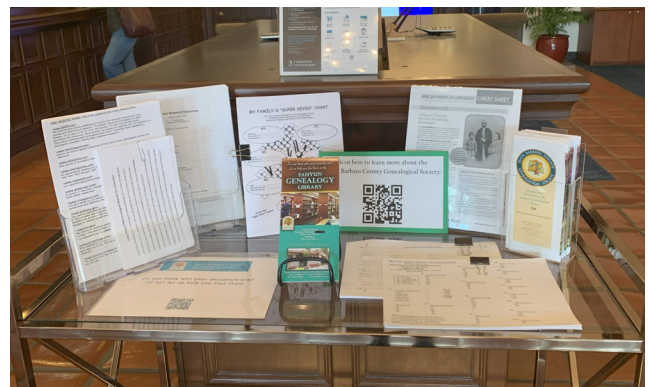
SBCGS will have a table at the following events:

- **September 19: Family Day**, 9am-noon at Carpinteria Valley Historical Museum
- **October 14: Santa Barbara Senior Expo**, 9am-noon at Earl Warren Showgrounds
- **October 18: Asian American Neighborhood Festival**, 11 AM – 3 PM at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park

HELP NEEDED!! We need two people to help at our table at the event sharing about our Society and services, as well as providing information on our exhibits and upcoming Picnic in the Cemetery. You will be provided with all the supplies and SBTHP will provide a table and canopy.



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.



Montecito Bank & Trust Business Month of September

SBCGS will be featured as Montecito Bank & Trust's Business of the Month this month. Check out our little display.

Outreach

by Holly Snyder, Chair



Family History Month Open House

Sunday, October 5, 2026
1:00 - 4:00 pm

Sahyun Genealogical Library
316 Castillo Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Come join us and bring a friend!

Special interest groups, lineage and military groups, and partner community historical organizations will be joining us and will be ready to answer your research questions. Receive a free family tree fan chart from FamilySearch*, materials to help with your genealogy search, and enjoy some treats!

Also, on display will be the heritage quilt display and Mud Pie Stories written by SBCGS members.

*Create a free FamilySearch account ahead of time for the best experience.

Volunteers needed! Please consider helping us out to help make this event the best experience for attendees. Opportunities include helping us prep the day before (October 4), set up the day of the event, greeters, check-in table, bring a treat, research helper, photographer, tour guide, and clean up. Email outreach@sbgen.org if you'd like to help!

September Volunteer of the Month William Noack



**September
Member of
the Month:
William
Noack!**

- Member of 10+ years
- Member of the Board of Directors
- Director of Property Rentals
- Avid book collector and researcher

William has been an incredible part of our Society for over a decade, serving as a member of The Board of Directors and helping with all sorts of back end operations. He is also currently in charge of our property rentals, alarm, gate, and interior library maintenance.

William first visited the Sahyun Library in 2013 after seeing an advertisement for our annual open house. Despite living only a few blocks away since 1996, he had never actually been inside! After visiting, William said that he was “instantly” impressed and joined the Society on the spot.”

Since he lived so close to the library, he was also recruited to be in charge of any emergencies or alarm calls. One particularly memorable night began with a fire alarm going off. This led to him having quite the impromptu adventure that included a fire engine and firemen needing to enter the library!

William’s interest in genealogy began very young, when he was 12 or 13. He’d grown up seeing the genealogical research and records his father had done in the 1930s. This interest

only grew when his grandmother told him that she knew nothing about one of her grandmothers. This sent William and his mother to the Los Angeles Public Library Genealogy Room and he was able to trace his grandmother’s line back to the Mayflower and even to King Edward I. William said of this, “Finding royalty was exciting, especially for a young boy!”

After more than 60 years of pursuing this hobby, William says he still discovers new things. While volunteering at the front desk, he learned one of his great-great-great grandfathers was involved in Napoleon’s invasion of Russia!

William is also an avid book collector, with a library boasting over 35,000 volumes. He recently inherited 200,000 more from a friend, so he will be busy working through those while also thankfully still being involved in our society.

Thank you, William, for all of the time, knowledge, and behind the scenes work you contribute to SBCGS. We are looking forward to many more years!

(By Caroline McCarty)



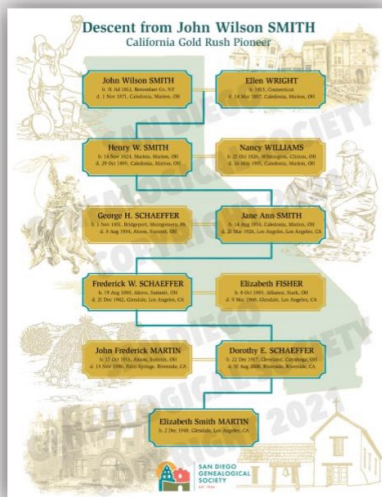
San Diego Genealogical Society Launches California Pioneer Certificate Program

Date: May 2023

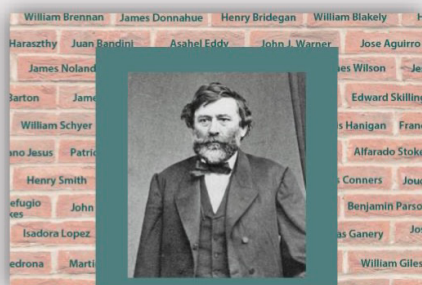
Contact: Colin Whitney, SDGS Educational Programs,
pioneercertificateprogram@gmail.com



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.