

## GenSmarts Continues to Keep Genealogists Busy

By Richard Rands

In August 2004, we published a very positive review of GenSmarts version 1050, noting the power of the systematic application of research rules built into the program to make thousands of suggestions that might lead to discoveries about your family tree. Since that time, Underwood Innovations LLC has continued to update the number of resources it will draw upon when making suggestions for places to research your family history. Also it has added refinements to the rules that will make the suggestions more effective.

In case you are new to GenSmarts, it is well worth providing a description of the program. Unlike the widely known family history data management programs such as PAF, Roots-Magic, Family Tree Maker, Legacy, or Ancestral Quest, GenSmarts is a utility program, aimed at helping you locate sources of information missing from your data management program. It will read through all the data in your family history database and create a "profile" for each of the individuals, using the time and place where each one lived. Then, using a set of logical rules built into the program, it attempts to match each profile with the list of data repositories it maintains in its memory, look-

*GenSmarts can be a powerful tool for any family history researcher. Besides giving you a comprehensive list of research suggestions, it will help you improve the quality of the details in your database.*

ing for suggestions of where you should look for answers to your missing data.

For example, if you are missing the death date and place of an ancestor who lived in the United States and his or her profile based on birth dates of other family members hints that he or she lived after 1875, the program will suggest that you look in the U.S. Social Security Death Index. Not only will it tell you where to look, it will give you a hot link to the site where the repository can be found, and it will pass most of the search criteria to the site's search engine.

Obviously, if you wish to use the hot link to a repository, you will need to be connected to the Internet. But if you are looking only for the suggestions, you can use the program off-line. You will still be astounded by the number of places the program lists in your "To Do List." For my database of about 50,000 names, it offers more than 202,000 suggestions of places to look for data and document items that are missing.

When you install and configure the program, you will be asked to provide the log on

names and passwords for memberships at repositories, so that the program can access fee-based sites along with the free sites among the list of suggested searches. As new repositories come into existence, the GenSmarts program will automatically add them to its list when you start up the program and connect to the Internet. At this point, the program will only provide suggestions from an inventory of repositories from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K., plus some from Australia.

GenSmarts is able to work its magic on virtually every major family history software program. Even if you use a more obscure program, as long as you can generate a GEDCOM file, you will be able to make use of the intelligence built into the program. The program will not run on the Mac – not even under the Windows emulation feature. It will run on all common versions of Windows, including Vista.

GenSmarts does not interact with your database to allow you to directly update any information. Any details you discover through the use of the program must be copied from the screen for later entry into

your database. Once you have loaded GenSmarts the first time, it will remember the last database you worked on each time you reopen the program.

Since the quality of the research suggestions are heavily dependent on the quality of the data in your database, success from GenSmarts will hinge entirely whether you enter the data into your database in ways that the "smart" rules can decipher. Since most genealogy programs do a good job of separating the components of each individual's name, GenSmarts' rules do a good job of understanding names. Dates are handled equally well.

However, place names are a different story. Virtually all of the research suggestions you will get from GenSmarts are tied to a location that is determined by the place names in your database. If the "smart" rules cannot decipher your place names, then most of the research suggestions will be useless. Consequently, GenSmarts includes a "Data Cleanup" function that is extremely important for you to work through before you devote much time following the research leads in the "To Do List." In short, start with the "Data Cleanup" function before you do anything else in GenSmarts.

The place name cleanup

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function is well conceived, but can be daunting if you have a large number of places that cannot be interpreted. Fortunately a large button on the "Data Cleanup" screen labeled "Help On Place Name Data Cleanup" gives you access to a reasonably good description of the interpretation rules. The program breaks the list of place name problems into categories based on the amount of useable information in each place name. You will quickly discover that it pays to use a consistent pattern when entering place names, and the pattern recommended in the *Family History Documentation Guidelines* will help. I cannot emphasize enough the need clean up the place names in your database so that the rules in GenSmarts for interpreting place names are optimized.

Keep in mind that the primary purpose of GenSmarts is to make intelligent research suggestions about missing data in your database. The rules built into GenSmarts are impressive, and when the data in your database are accurate, the "To Do List" is highly likely to lead you to sources of missing data.

In addition to providing suggestions for the individuals in your database, GenSmarts offers a "Query" tab on the main screen that will allow you to enter other names with dates and places that can be submitted to the program's rules. The next time someone complains to you about not knowing what to do about a dead end in a database, you can fire up GenSmarts and make a special query just for them.

The "To Do List" screen is well thought out and offers a good variety of selection or filtering criteria, as well as a search feature to narrow the list of suggestions. It includes a reasonable explanation for each suggestion; when the suggested source is available online, you can click a button that will take you directly to the targeted site on the Internet. Whenever possible, it will transfer your search criteria to the search engine and take you directly to the page you need. The accuracy of this aspect of the process is entirely dependent on the quality of the search capability of the Web site. It is necessary for you to be somewhat familiar with the

online site, and you often will be forced to refine the search at the site to do a thorough job of researching the source.

Additional features on the To Do List screen allow you to sort the suggestions by priority, surname, date, and geography, or to flag the status of each suggestion as found, not found, or planned. The overall design of the screen is effective and navigating it will soon become second nature to a frequent user.

It did not take long to discover some limitations to GenSmarts' rules. First of all, I found that I had to have my PAF database open at the same time to check the accuracy of some of the suggestions. It was convenient to have my PAF database open on my desktop computer and GenSmarts running on my laptop. Of course, both machines must have identical copies of your database. It is possible to have your database software running at the same time on a single computer as GenSmarts, in separate windows. I found that the rules became hopelessly befuddled when an individual has multiple marriages, either because of divorce, or as additional marriage. And as mentioned above, if place names are misinterpreted, you will get suggestions that will send you off to a record source that will be more amusing than helpful.

The explanation that is produced for each suggestion is useful. One feature that is not prominently documented is the use of the term GSEST in the text of the explanation. Whenever the rules in GenSmarts require that a detail such as a birth date or marriage date be estimated, it prefixes the estimated detail with the term GSEST – meaning GenSmarts ESTimated.

GenSmarts can be a powerful tool for any family history researcher. Besides giving you a comprehensive list of research suggestions, it will help you improve the quality of the details in your database. And just as importantly, it will expose you to record sources that you may have never searched before and will give you invaluable experience for future research.

Get Version 2.1.1.30 - \$24.95 at [www.gensmarts.com](http://www.gensmarts.com)

## Lore Galore Contest

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group is all about documentation. Got a fact? Document it. Got a story? Document it. Careful documentation of the sources of family history information is critical in getting your family's story straight.

To encourage good research, SVC GG is sponsoring a contest, Lore Galore. Participants will write down a story from their family's lore, then will explain what they did to find out the truth behind the story. For ideas, see "Family lore: A tale of two grandmothers," in this issue of the *PastFinder*. The goal is not to present the most entertaining story, but to explain your efforts to verify the story behind the story.

**Contest:** Each entry should include a description of a family lore story, with a description of the steps you took to find the real story behind the lore. The story need not be about your own direct ancestors, but the research uncovering the real story must be yours.

For example, you might have looked for the truth behind family lore by checking census records, finding ship logs or manifests, lo-

cating family members' letters, or obtaining oral history from those alive at the time. List any sources you consulted to verify or unearth the truth about the family lore.

**Entries:** Each entry is limited to 1,000 words, excluding sources. Submit entries by e-mail to: [siliconvalley-group@earthlink.net](mailto:siliconvalley-group@earthlink.net). Entries also can be submitted by postal mail to the users group, through the address listed on the back page of the newsletter. If you submit by email, configure any email spam filters to allow a reply message from the email address listed here. Be sure to include your name and address with your entry. Entries will be evaluated by a panel of family history researchers.

By entering the contest, the submitters give the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group the non-exclusive right to publish contest entries, with the approval of the submitter. Entries will not be returned. Entries posted on the Website may be edited for clarity.

**Prizes:** First place prize is \$100. Second place is \$50. Third place is a copy of the board game Family Lore or a Research Pack

(containing *Family History Documentation Guidelines*, 10 Stuck-on-Sources pads, and a flash drive). Winning entries can be listed on

the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group website's story page, [www.AuntAlice.net](http://www.AuntAlice.net), which will be activated for the contest.

## Family Lore: A tale of two grandmothers

By Janet Brigham Rands

It was a story I heard so many times as a child, it formed the backdrop for everything else in our family: In 1863, my second-great-grandfather Niels, his wife Karen, and their two children sailed from Denmark to Liverpool, then from Liverpool to New York City. During the voyage, Karen gave birth to a stillborn baby. The baby was buried at sea, and Karen died in New York, but the family never knew where she was buried.

The story was recounted numerous times by my great-grandfather in his diaries and accounts, as he relived the trauma of losing his mother when he was four years old. The numerous times he wrote about his life, he always started with that story.

Long before I developed an interest in family history, I was compelled by Karen's story. Why didn't the family know what happened to her body? What were young Jens' final images of his mother? Why couldn't he leave the story behind, many decades later?

The story remained in the realm of family lore until I was in New York City a few years ago. I wondered how I might find Karen's death records, and imagined having to spend days searching in libraries and archives. Before the trip, I looked up vital records information for Manhattan and found an archive not far from the hotel where we would be staying. I also looked up Karen's voyage on the Mormon Immigration Index and noted all the pertinent details, including the notations of the baby's birth, death, and burial, and the mention of Karen's death.

Within 5 minutes of my arrival at the archive, an assistant had helped me find and load a microfilm that should contain the information. Within another 5 minutes, I was reading an image of Karen's death certificate. Within another 20 minutes, I held a certified copy in my hands.

The lore was correct, to a point. The baby was born at sea, but lived two days and was buried at sea on the third day. Karen died in New York Harbor two days after the baby's burial, her body taken from the ship on a small boat, then taken through Castle Garden, then to a city morgue, then to Ward's Island for burial in an unmarked grave alongside deceased immigrants from a nearby hospital.

It took me about an hour to find the truth behind the lore of Karen's death, and a few hours studying Manhattan historical maps and documents to locate the site of the graveyard. I still cringe, however, at the cause of death listed on her death certificate: "the effects of prostitution." The coroner, evidently assuming the worst about an immigrant, failed to recognize signs of childbirth and infection.

This tragedy became the backdrop for the remaining decades in the lives of my great-grandfather and his sister. A few years

after losing their mother, they lost their father to tuberculosis. My grandfather managed to thrive into his 80s; his sister did not.

In this story that became family lore, the lore was only a few details away from what appears to be the correct story. In other such stories, the devil is not in the details, but rather in the whole story.

Another family line on my mother's side also emigrated, in this case from Buckinghamshire, England, as Mormon converts and pioneers. The matriarch of that family lost her husband in Illinois when he was 52. She trekked with family to what is now Utah, outliving him by 20 years.

Two stories of her life have been published with the same photo, one biographical sketch listed under the surname of her first husband, the other under the surname of a second husband. One version describes her as an educated young woman from a wealthy, titled English family. In this account, she was disowned for marrying beneath her station. She became a pioneer physician in the West, according to this version.

In another account published in the same set of biographies, she comes from humble circumstances and distinguishes herself by caring for others and being a good mother.

A search of census and community records finds no evidence for the first account, but ample evidence for the second. Census records indicate that her father was a laborer and her mother was a lacemaker, which was a common cottage industry. Family lore of her kindness appear to be substantiated by family accounts, but nothing substantiates the tale of wealth, privilege, and education.

The real story, then, is not which background is correct, but why descendants would fabricate the details of wealth, education, and family discord. Within the lore lie the seeds for a more intriguing inquiry: Who in the family apparently felt compelled to create a fantasy genealogy, particularly when her life already was heroic? This question is more difficult to answer; addressing it risks alienating branches of the family accustomed to believing they sprang from landed gentry.

These are the questions of family lore. Which parts are valid, and which result from the distortion of time, from mistakes, or even from mistaken pride? Although it's impossible to determine all the facts of family history, it can be illuminating to dig deep enough to identify discrepancies.

In the case of my great-grandmother dying at sea, the discrepancies are understandable because of the age of her son who later recounted the story, as well as the confusion of the circumstances. In the case of the apparently spurious wealth and title in the other story, the discrepancies are illuminating because they point to an apparent need to establish status in a hierarchical frontier culture. Both tell a story, although probably not the story the tellers thought they were telling.

# The Homestead Act and the Westward Migration

By Allin Kingsbury

The Homestead Act of 1862 is probably the greatest single cause of the settlement of the Western United States. The "free" land attracted millions who moved into the states west of the Missouri River that were considered the frontier and inhabited by Native Americans at the time. By 1934, more than 1.6 million homestead applications were processed which represented about 270 million acres, or 10 percent of all U.S. lands. The Homestead Act was finally repealed in the 48 contiguous states with the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, except for a ten-year extension on claims in Alaska.

## History of Homesteading

The ideas behind the Homestead Act were by no means new when it was passed. Thomas Jefferson was a supporter of the concept of broad ownership of the land. This was unusual because most of the leaders in the South opposed homesteading because it would weaken the institution of slavery. In 1848, the Free Soil Party was organized with the slogan, "Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men." They wanted cheap postage, discouragement of slavery, and a homestead law. The party did not survive the 1848 election, and its supporters eventually found their way into the Republican Party which was organized in 1854.

Land was sold by the government at prices which sound cheap to us now. In 1785, land was about \$1 per acre, but the minimum land sale by the Federal government was 640 acres. The average farmer could not afford this much land and so land was purchased by the wealthy and by land speculators who profited by dividing the land into smaller parcels and selling it. In 1800, the Harrison Land Law attempted to make land easier to obtain for new settlers. The law stated that 320 acres of land could be purchased for \$2.00 per acre with 4 years to pay off the cost. In 1820, the price per acre was reduced to \$1.25 per acre, but the credit features of the law were abolished. The minimum size of the purchase was reduced and the overall effect of the law produced a large increase in land sales.

The Southerners were able to muster enough votes to defeat legislation supporting homesteading in 1852 and 1858. In 1860, homesteading legislation passed both the Senate and House, but was vetoed by President Buchanan. Finally, in 1862, the Homestead Act was passed and signed by President Lincoln. The Southern States had seceded from the union and there was little opposition left.

## The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act became law on January 1, 1863 during the Civil War. Under the new law, settlers could select a 160 acre parcel of land from the public domain and file a Declaration of Intent. The person must be a head of a family, which could be a father with his family, a widow with children, or a child caring for a parent or parents. The family had to live on the land for 5 years, build a home, and cultivate the land. The person must have be-

come a citizen by the end of the 5 years. Southerners were excluded because anyone taking up arms against the United States was excluded. In the case of death of the applicant, the heirs could continue the homestead process. The land could be sold for the benefit of minor children if the administrators decided it was the best course to support the orphaned children. Land speculators could not use the Homestead Act to obtain land because of the requirement to live on the land for five years.

When these terms were met, a final application was filed which included testimony of witness that the conditions were met. The claimant also had to pay a fee of \$10 which was a lot of money at the time, even though the land was free. The deed was awarded to the claimant when all the conditions were met.

## Other Homestead Legislation

The Southern Homestead Act was passed in 1866 to provide homestead land for freed slaves. The \$5.00 fee was beyond the ability of almost all the freed slaves to pay. The act was also sabotaged by southern administrators who granted inferior land to keep the slaves on the plantation where they provided cheap labor.

The Timber Culture Act of 1875 provided opportunity to homestead 160 acres to those who would plant and maintain trees on the treeless prairie. The individuals did not have to live on the land and could file a claim for timber culture in addition to a homestead claim.

The Grasshopper Acts were passed in 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878 and 1879 to grant extensions to the residency requirement for homesteaders who were forced to leave their homesteads because of crop destruction by grasshoppers. Many of these individuals left their land to earn cash to support their families. The acts typically extended the time to prove a claim by one year and allowed a leave of absence.

The Kinkaid Act of 1904 amended the Homestead Act to allow Homesteads of 640 acres under certain conditions. Those who had a homestead could add to their land up to a total of 640 acres. The additional land was non-irrigable and residence of 5 years on the original homestead land was counted as sufficient to claim the new land. The land available under the Kinkaid Act was in the sand hills of western Nebraska. The area was arid and any rainfall percolated through the sandy soil. Vegetation there maintained a shallow root system that was often unable to hold the soil in place.

The Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 authorized homesteads of 320 acres in the arid areas of the west. It was intended to encourage dry farming. Claimants could add to their existing homestead by claiming adjacent land up to a total of 320 acres and the residency requirement of one parcel would satisfy the residency requirement for the other.

The Military Service Act of 1898 stated that any soldier, officer, marine or seaman could use time serving in the military to satisfy the residency requirement of the Homestead Act. Proof of military service was required and is often accomplished by submit-

ting difficult-to-find documents about military service of the claimant.

### Finding Homestead Records

One must know the legal description of the land, including section number, township number and range number, before the records can be located. There has been quite an effort made to index the land office records, and public land states east of the Mississippi are now indexed and available on CD-ROM. The indices include details about each claim, including the reference numbers needed to order copies of the actual records. For the Eastern States, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has the tract books and patents. The tract books are arranged by the legal description of the land (township, range, section, etc). Land patents are the legal documents that transferred land ownership from the U.S. Government to individuals. Land patents for both Eastern and Western states can be searched online at the Bureau of Land Management Web page at: [www.archives.gov/genealogy/land/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/genealogy/land/index.html) Please note that this includes only patented or completed land entries. Cancelled or relinquished case files will not be there, and may contain just as much useful information for the researcher. For this information, researchers will need to access the tract books.

This includes the states of: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

For further information about homesteads east of the Mississippi, contact:

Bureau of Land Management  
Eastern States  
Attn: Public Services Section  
7450 Boston Boulevard  
Springfield VA 22153

For the Western States, the tract books are located in the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. These records are for the states of: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

The homestead case files can be found at the National Archives and Records Administration. To request homestead file information, ask for NATF-Form 84, National Archives Order for Copies of Land Entry Files. The address to write to is: Textual Reference Branch -- Land (NWDTI), National Archives and Records Administration, 7th and Pennsylvania AV NW, Washington DC 20408. The telephone number is 202-501-5395. The land records of most interest to genealogists are the land entry case files. These are records that document the transfer of public lands from the U.S. Government to private ownership. The National Archives has more than ten million case files for land entries in the 30 public land states.

The case files are filed as either military bounty land warrants, pre-1908 general land entry files, or as post-1908 land entry files. The information required to access and order copies of the records will differ depending on which of these 3 categories contain the file.

For land records in the 20 states that were never part of the original public domain, the Homestead Act did not apply. Land records for these states reside in the State Archives for that particular state. These states include the original 13 colonies, Hawaii, Kentucky, Maine, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, and West Virginia.

### Records of Homestead Claims

The land case files held by the National Archives (NARA) contain documents relating to a homestead claim. The files are being scanned and placed on the Internet. Documents to be found in the file may include:

- Proof Required Under Homestead Acts May 30, 1862 and June 21, 1866:
- Affidavit Required of Homestead Claimants, Acts Of May 30, 1862 and June 21, 1866
- Certificate of Eligibility
- Receipts for payment of fees paid to the Land Office
- Application to enter homestead land
- Affidavit required for entry to homestead land.
- Documents submitted as proof for statements made in homestead documents

The case file often has original documents submitted as proof of death, marriage, or naturalization. Occasionally the members of a family and ages are listed to support the claim. The testimony of the witnesses often provides clues for further research because the witnesses knew the family for the homesteading period.

Also of interest is the affidavit which describes the improvements made to the land and the crops that were grown. This is a look at what life was like when they took up residence on the homestead. Often the home is described in detail. For example, the homestead case file for Emily J. Rogers describes a "14 by 16 feet one story and half high shingle roof and wood floor and with 3 doors and seven windows that is a comfortable house to live in." By current standards for a starter home, this would be considered a shed or workshop. For poor immigrants, getting a homestead was hard work. The details about the homestead are an excellent source of detail when writing a biographical sketch for a family history. The land records give the dates when they took up residence, thus giving their location while they lived on the homestead.

### The Historian's View

Most historians today view the Homestead Act as a failure. Half the families that began homesteading did not complete the 5 year residency requirement and abandoned the homestead. Much of the good land went to the railroads and others with political influence. There were instances of corruption in the disposal of the public land. Also, much of the land was ill-suited to cultivation and could not support a family.

The availability of free land did attract immigrants and was a strong incentive to populate the western United States. Many of the homesteaders had no experience with agriculture and had to learn how to cultivate crops as they established themselves on their homestead. The homesteaders were often immigrant families who were newly arrived from Europe, but they also included factory workers in the East who wanted to own land and sons of

farmers who wanted farms of their own.

### For Further Reading

The following books and articles will provide more detailed historical information about the history of the Homestead Act and its results:

- Hibbard, Benjamin, *A History of the Public Land Policies*, 1965
- Potter, Lee Ann and Wynell Schamel. "The Homestead Act of 1862." *Social Education* 61, 6 (October 1997): 359-364
- "Accessing the General Land Office Records" by Jim Gegen in

*Genealogical Computing*, Vol. 13, No. 3, a quarterly journal published by Ancestry

- Buckley, F.H. "The American Fresh Start." 1995. *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal* (fall).
- Chen, Jim. "Of Agriculture's First Disobedience and Its Fruit." 1995. *Vanderbilt Law Review* (October).
- Nore, Michael J. "'Burn This without Fail': The Downfall of Oregon's Sen. John H. Mitchell." 1995. *Oregon State Bar Bulletin* (October).

## What We've Learned From FamilySearch Indexing

By Richard and Janet Brigham Rands

When the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group got approval to be an official indexing group for FamilySearch Indexing, we signed up. We downloaded the software, downloaded census pages to index, and began deciphering census-takers' handwriting.

Since then, we've indexed our way through hundreds of handwritten pages, working initially in the 1900 U.S. Census and since then in a variety of state and local censuses and other projects. We often do it on Sunday evenings, with Richard sitting at his desk in the family room and working on his desktop, and Janet sitting in a recliner and working on her laptop. When one of us has difficulty deciphering a name, we ask the other's opinion. Our most common conversation is, "I need you to take a look at this..."

Often, we find that it helps to be a few feet away from the image in question. Sometimes the overall impression appears to be more correct than the up-close deciphering. Sometimes the opposite is the case.

We are by no means the SVC GG indexing champions. That honor goes to Vonda Cooper, who indexes at an amazing pace whether she's in Florida or California. Other champion indexers this year are Jolene Farnsworth of Utah and Micki Mistretta of California.

In the 18 months since the indexing project started, we've learned a lot about censuses, old handwriting, and our own limitations: We've learned—

1. There is a certain art to interpreting the variety of handwriting styles of those who served as enumerators. A second set of eyes are often just what it takes to "see" the correct information.
2. Many widely differing handwriting styles were prevalent in the country, which is a reflection on the lack of a consistent style being taught in the schools where emigrants were learning English. It makes you appreciate the importance of writing clearly.
3. Ancestors can be missing from a census or some other record as a result of many circumstances, such as missing pages, undecipherable pages, poor spelling, or disrupted family life.
4. Indexing a few consecutive pages of a census will often reveal a great deal about the community, such as pockets of emigrants from a similar country, extended family living in the same neighborhood, or groups of people with similar ethnic back-

grounds.

5. It is interesting to follow the naming patterns, or lack thereof, among the various groups.

6. It is informative to follow the family size, the age gaps, and the differing practices of having the men emigrate with or without their families, then sending for them later.

7. Indexing forces upon you a mini geography lesson if you take the time to look up some history about the place and time of the records. It is even more fascinating if you have lived in the district where you are indexing. You might even encounter ancestors of old friends from the past.

8. When indexing death records, it is not uncommon to see the effects of an epidemic that kills unusually large numbers of children, or strikes many from the same family.

9. Looking at the census records can reveal far more than expected about a family, such as the wife's maiden name when one of her parents is living with the family, or a daughter's married name if she and her husband are living with the family, or trades, family businesses, and illnesses.

10. The birth places of children may reveal a pattern of movement and may make it possible to locate other records in places not otherwise known.

11. Sometimes, a census was taken not long before a disaster. As we work through the names, we wonder what happened to each person when the disaster hit. This particularly stuck us as we indexed names from the area near Union Square in San Francisco, recorded not long before the 1906 earthquake devastated much of the city.

12. Many people survived difficulties we can barely imagine. It's not that unusual to encounter a woman listed as having had perhaps eight children, with one surviving. Tragedies—outlived and survived—are evident throughout the records we index. This always helps us put our own challenges and problems into perspective.

### SVC GG Indexing Project Scorecard

|                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 105 indexers               | 80,557 names done in 2008 |
| 14,650 names done in 2006  | (January-March)           |
| 362,084 names done in 2007 | 457,291 total names done  |

## Spider Webs: Kartenmeister, Georgia Confederate Graves, RootsWeb Denmark, New York Vital Records, Digitize Family History

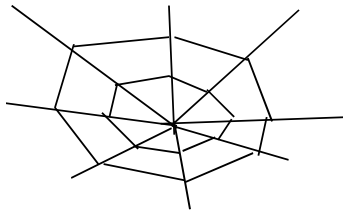
### Kartenmeister

Kartenmeister is a database containing 75562 locations in Eastern Germany, Lithuania and Poland that were under German rule in 1918. The database lists more than 30,559 name changes once, and 5,500 twice and more. All locations are east of the Oder and Neisse rivers and are based on the borders of the eastern provinces in the Spring of 1918. The area covered includes the provinces: Eastprussia, including Memel, Westprussia, Brandenburg, Posen, Pomerania, and Silesia. It currently lists most towns or points (Mills, some bridges, battlefields, named trees, cenotaphs etc.). The database can be searched by:

1. German name
2. Older German name
3. Kreis/County
4. The next larger town, (this is a proximity search.)
5. Today's Polish, Russian or Lithuanian name.
6. Family Name

The information returned includes the location of the place in degrees and minutes and a very brief description. The place is linked to a page where a commercial map of the area can be purchased online.

To search the database, go to: [www.kartenmeister.com/preview/databaseuwe.asp](http://www.kartenmeister.com/preview/databaseuwe.asp)



### Georgia Confederate Graves

The Confederate Grave database now has 2412 grave sites of Confederate Soldiers located in 20 Georgia counties. The Web site is part of an ongoing project which hopes to collect all the burial locations of Confederate soldiers in all 159 counties of Georgia. A search of the database gives a list including the name cemetery and unit of the soldier. A click on the name gives the complete details of the individual that are available. To visit the site, go to: [www.csagraves.com/](http://www.csagraves.com/)

### RootsWeb Denmark

Welcome to the RootsWeb Denmark List is a Web site intended to help individuals getting started with research on their Danish ancestry. The site has links to other sites with important databases for research such as Danish census records. The site has a research guide listing sources of research data and steps to take in tracing a family history. Another page on the site has sources for photos of Denmark. The regional resources

page is still under construction, but will have sources organized by county such as transcriptions of records done by volunteers in Denmark. Still another page has information for travelers to Denmark. To see the site, go to:

<http://homepage.mac.com/sootica/Sites/DenmarkFAQ/index.html>

### New York Vital Records

A law was passed by the state of New York requiring vital records (births, marriages and deaths) to be kept by school districts. Some areas ignored the law. Others kept the records, but generally did not keep complete records. The law was terminated in 1849. The source links known records for the period, 1846-1849 by county. To see the records, go to: [www.newhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com/ny-vr-1846-1849.htm](http://www.newhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com/ny-vr-1846-1849.htm)

### Digitize Family History

Digitize Family History is a site with how to information about digitizing and sharing family history. The sight owners claim that, "Any technology, method, or tip that pertains to digitizing family history, we aim to find it, learn it, and share it. If you need to preserve or share your family history, we can help you with that." To visit the site, go to: [www.digitizefamilyhistory.com/](http://www.digitizefamilyhistory.com/)

## Ask the Doc — "I Give No Answers Before Their Time!"

**Q** I just bought iMac and tried to transfer my PAF genealogy files to it. I was dismayed when my computer told me that it does not accept "classic" files. Is there any way of transferring these files? I have spent many years putting this file together and have over 3,500 individuals on it. If this is not possible, what other possibilities do I have? I have heard of a software called Reunion—is this compatible with my new computer? If it is, would I have to type all my information all over again on it? Please let me know what I can do to do my genealogy on my new computer.



couple of different programs, one called Virtual PC by Microsoft, and the other called Parallels Desktop by Parallels. Microsoft is no longer selling Virtual PC, so you would have to find a copy on eBay. You can go to [www.parallels.com](http://www.parallels.com) and download their trial version and try it out. Once you have Windows running in emulation mode on your iMac, you can install PAF and then import your files from your old machine.

**A**s you have discovered, PAF does not run in native mode on an iMac. You will not have to retype any of your PAF database information, however. You only need to decide how you wish to handle your database on the iMac. Most of the new Apple computers are able to run Windows in emulation mode using a

Alternatively, you can switch to the very popular Reunion program and import your PAF data using the GEDCOM file format. To create a GEDCOM file of your PAF data on the old Windows computer, choose the Export feature from the Files menu in PAF and select all of your data. Then choose the Import feature in Reunion to copy all of your PAF data into the program. Our group also has Mac experts who can help you.

## OFFICERS AND STAFF

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| Carlene Foster      | PastFinder Mailing      |

## Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

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

Richard D. Rands, President rrandse@earthlink.net (650) 969 6567

Please send inquiries, address changes, new memberships, and membership renewals to:  
SV-CGG, P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA 95153-3670 or leslyk@comcast.net

SV-CGG meets monthly, except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building, 875 Quince Avenue, Santa Clara, CA. We offer classes and sponsor guest speakers at meetings to help family historians with computer technology and research techniques. Membership dues are US\$15 per year (US\$20 for Canada and US\$25 for other international). Members are offered classes at meetings, mentor help, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* (a monthly newsletter published each month there is a meeting).

### CONTACT INFORMATION

|            |                 |  |
|------------|-----------------|--|
| Membership | Lesly Klippel   | leslyk@comcast.net (408) 269 5484        |
| Newsletter | Allin Kingsbury | a.kingsbury@sbcglobal.net (408) 257 8447 |
| Classes    | Brian Smith     | bsmith4gen@yahoo.com (408) 255 6663      |
| Questions  | Dr. PAF         | rands@earthlink.net                      |

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*Silicon Valley PastFinder* is the official publication of the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group, a nonprofit organization. Published monthly except December, *Silicon Valley PastFinder* is distributed at the door to all members attending the meeting, and mailed to others after the meeting. Members may elect to receive the newsletter by e-mail and get the PastFinder Bulletin too.

Articles contributed by readers are welcome. Articles may be submitted as a text file on PC-compatible disk, CD-ROM, or as an e-mail attachment. The editors reserve the right to accept, reject, and edit articles. Articles are not returned.

The following can be ordered from [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) or at 1-800-537 5950:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Personal Ancestral File 2.3.1 Macintosh (diskette or CD version)   | US\$6    |
| Personal Ancestral File 4.04   | US\$6    |
| Personal Ancestral File 5.2.18 and 4 (Windows), PAF 3, and 2.31 (DOS), lessons and user guide, Personal Ancestral File Companion 5.2 Windows (2 CDs)   | US\$8.25 |
| Personal Ancestral File 4.04.18 and 5.2.18, PAF Companion (evaluation) or PAF User's Guide (English, Spanish, French, German, or Portuguese) downloaded at: <a href="http://www.FamilySearch.org">www.FamilySearch.org</a> | free     |

The following can be ordered from [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org) or the group address (see above):

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Newsletter back issues if available, per issue                             | US\$1 (order by mail or purchase at meetings) |
| Videos of classes; syllabus copies   | See Web site for titles, prices               |
| <i>Family History Documentation Guidelines</i>                             | Available at meetings and on Web site         |
| Stuck-on Sources Post-It note pads   | Available at meetings and on Web site         |
| Flash Drives with SVCCG logo and loaded with 9000 Internet genealogy sites | Available at cost on Web site and at meetings |

### CLASSES FOR 10 MAY 2008

#### Software Classes

- Reunion 9 for Mac Users
- Getting Started with Reunion
- Using new.FamilySearch Workshop

- PAF and PC's for Beginners

**General Class:** Marcia Holstrom -  
Westward Migration: From the Mississippi to the Sierra and Cascades

For more details or changes, go to: [www.svcomputergenealogy.org](http://www.svcomputergenealogy.org)



Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group  
The former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group

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