

~ **FEBRUARY SPEAKER** ~

Charles G. Meigs, Jr.

Born in Arkansas during World War II and growing up in South Central Los Angeles, Charles Meigs began researching his personal genealogy in December 1990. His efforts have led him to discover African American ancestors in the Cherokee Tribe, and African American slave ancestors in Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Georgia and South Carolina. As a result of his personal research and the knowledge he's gained in the process, he conducts a monthly workshop on Cherokee genealogy and one on African American genealogy at the Family History Library in Los Angeles.

Charles has a degree in Engineering from UCLA, and when not researching his family tree, he is an independent management consultant who conducts strategic planning and group problem-solving efforts for clients. He has a daughter and two toddler grandsons, and has been married to his high school sweetheart, Barbara, for over thirty-five years.

~ **FEBRUARY INTERMEDIATE CLASS** ~

Using Federal Land Records, presented by John McCoy

When your ancestor was among the early settlers of a "Federal Lands state," and the county courthouse burned down in 1850, can the land office tract books fill in some of the gaps? How do you read a tract book, anyhow? Exactly where is E ½ SE ¼ Sec. 19 T 8 N R 11 W? Join us on February 16 to find out!

~ **REFRESHMENTS** ~

Georgie (Peterson) LYONS (562) 432-4908

Thank you to our January Hosts:

Wanda Ballard
Marilyn (DeLonjay) Brasher
Cynthia Day-Elliott
Priscilla (Colvin) Nielsen
Mary (White) Smith
Connie Williams

Our February Hosts will be:

Linda Artuso
Marilyn (DeLonjay) Brasher
Hazele (Thresher) Johnson
Jeanette (Marcus) Jones

~ **MEMBERSHIP REPORT** ~

Jeanette (Marcus) JONES (562) 421-5610

JANUARY MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members: 26

Visitors: 2

RENEWALS for January

Brandt, Betty Jean Subscription \$12 to 9/03

Thanks for your continued support!

~ **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN** ~

MANY HANDS REWRITE HISTORY

It seems like yesterday -- my first computer genealogy program, my first e-mails, the first genealogy "bulletin boards" on the Internet. Almost the only information available was in the form of terse messages: "Who were parents of Ransom Smith and his brother Plez? Madge in Pikeville." Nevertheless, the Internet grew and grew. Entrepreneurs seized an opportunity to sell us all sorts of programs, gadgets, and services. They even tried to sell me my own research!

Alarmed at the prospect of our national and personal heritage passing from public to private ownership, a number of genealogists banded together. Collaborative projects sprang up on the Internet with the aim of publishing genealogical and historical information before it could be copyrighted by private companies. These efforts continue, at times with spectacular results. The US GenWeb Archives is becoming a major source of records for American genealogy.

Somehow, in a few short years, genealogy on the Internet has made tremendous strides -- to such an extent that it can't be ignored, no matter how skeptical we must remain about the quality of compiled genealogies that we may find there. For after the individuals, spontaneous collaborations, and commercial ventures, came the libraries, universities, and governments, each eagerly embracing the model of Internet-based information delivery. Have you looked for immigrant ancestors recently? Government records from all over the world are turning up on the Internet in the form of searchable databases, and most of them are free of charge! Censuses are gradually being made available, most of them with excellent search features.

All of this data would not do much good without search engines. The number of web pages and documents indexed by Google.com is now in the billions, and it is even possible to use Google to resurrect copies of web pages that were once indexed by the search engine, but which no longer exist on the web itself! There is still a significant limitation: the search engines can't see into the databases where most of the government data are housed. For that, you have to use the search capabilities on each government web site. These tools, too, are becoming very sophisticated.

I would guess that the "next big thing" will be integration -- some way of combining databases, so that all U. S. censuses are combined in a single index!

But the greatest gain from the Internet may be one that is harder to see. Through the efforts of many, the individual stories of the lives and migrations of our ancestors are beginning to emerge in fantastic detail. Little by little, family letters and similar records are being published on the Internet. It becomes possible to find connections that seemed hopelessly lost. Here's my latest example: My Swiss ancestor Jean Pierre Samuel Marcel arrived at Philadelphia on the ship Liberty in 1805. He was a papermaker by trade, settling first in Georgetown, DC, then on to the vicinity of Lexington, KY, where his daughter Louise married a Mr. McCoy who has stubbornly refused to be found, but is known to have died before 1832. Their first child was my ancestor Georgette McCoy, whose obituary states that she was born in Ghent, Kentucky in 1816. Now, on that same ship Liberty was a Mr. Oboussier from Lausanne, Switzerland. I wondered if he might be somehow connected to the Marcel family. Fast-forward about 5 years: I am hosting an Internet bulletin board for genealogy in Canton Vaud, Switzerland, home of my Marcel family. A correspondent is searching for an Oboussier family in Vevey, Switzerland. One of her correspondents has an Oboussier family near Vevay, Indiana (a well-known Swiss settlement): specifically, across the river in Kentucky, Luke Oboussier, immigrant from Lausanne, was an early postmaster who died in 1816 at Ghent, KY. It becomes clear: Luke Oboussier must have been the person who sailed to Philadelphia in 1805 with my Marcel ancestor! Will that help me find the elusive Mr. McCoy, whose name might be Reuben or David? It's too early to tell, but without the Internet, I don't think I ever would have discovered this clue!

Remember, even if you don't own a computer, you can search the Internet from most public libraries and many Family History Centers. Happy hunting to everyone!

John McCoy

~ **FEATURE ARTICLE** ~

THE WORM'S EYE VIEW: First Name Last, Last Name First
by Beth Maltbie Uyehara

The word "patronymics" is a Latin derivative; that is, it's a word whose roots are derived from the Latin language. In the case of patronymics, there are three root elements: patro, from pater or patris, meaning "father"; nym, which comes from nomen or nominis, meaning "name"; and ics, from ick or yuck, meaning "a very bad idea."

Thanks to genealogy, I have learned more about patronymics than I ever wanted to know, including how to spell it.

Genealogists who descend from some of the world's saner ethnicities -- Germans and Poles and the French and English and Japanese and others who grasped the value of surnames early on -- can sit back and smirk while I bemoan the trials of those of us whose ancestors hailed from Scandinavia or Wales, both of which used patronymics.

In patronymics, there are no surnames; the last name of a child is based on the father's first name; thus, the family's last name changes every generation. In the Welsh system, the last name gets added on to. For example, a child "John" whose daddy was John the son of John, becomes "John" the son of John the son of John. As you can see, the Welsh could end up with some pretty long names in a few short generations. In Scandinavia, on the other hand, the last name changed entirely every generation.

In either case, you've got a research nightmare on your hands.

Marital conversations upon the arrival of a new Welsh baby apparently went something like this:

"Hey, John-the-son-of-John-the-son-of-John, let's call the baby John!"

"What a great idea, Mary-the-daughter-of-David-the-son-of-David. How'd you ever think of that?"

"Oh, I dunno, John-the-son-of-John-the-son-of-John, it just came to me out of the blue."

Of course, in Wales, they didn't say "son of" or "daughter of." They said "ap" or "mab" and "verch" or "ferch" respectively. Welsh women kept their maiden names when they married, because it would have been too baffling to call someone "Mary ap John" (Mary the son of John) (huh?) after she married "John ap John," instead of continuing to call her "Mary verch David" (Mary the daughter of David), which is who she was. You've got to draw the line somewhere.

Because of the length of the last names, to avoid crashing the Internet, the IGI indexes all Welsh people prior to 1812 only by their first names and, separately, by their fathers' first names. (There are two indexes.)

Let us pause here a moment, while the research implications of that sink in

Patronymics must have seemed like a good idea at the time when people were using it. When you're slowly working your way forward a generation at a time, it's fairly easy to keep track of everybody, especially if you come up with new baby names every generation. The problem arises when you're trying to trace people backwards in time by their first names only, and everybody and his brother has got the same few first names.

In Scandinavia, "bynames" delineating the relationship to the father followed the given name; occasionally, however, a nickname would be used as a last name instead. From the examples I found on the Internet, the usual nickname was something like "Snot Nose," which is not the kind of last name you want to hand down. In cases like that, patronymics was a blessing.

Overall, the Welsh had the more logical system. Creating Scandinavian bynames was not as easy as you might think. You had to switch around the final letters in the genitive form of the father's first name, then add the suffix for son or daughter. The first problem was finding someone who could explain what the genitive form of a name is. And, then, there were all those rules for switching the letters around. For example, in the olden days, a final i became an a, a became u, nn became ns, ll

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became ls, rr became rs except when it didn't, r became s and the suffixes dan, endr, gautr, mundr, undr, un, unn and vindr, among numerous others, required the addition of ar.

Without rules, where would we be?

One example I found of Scandinavian byname formation concerned a child named Yngvildr, who was the daughter of a man named Einarr. The child went through life as Yngvildr Einardottir. No wonder the Vikings were always beating people up.

It must have been a relief to everyone when surnames became universal. But, as you'd guess--the human race being what it is--it did not happen all at once.

In our modern era, we are used to everyone agreeing that the new year will start at midnight on December 31, and for the next 365 days (give or take a few minutes, or in my case, a couple of weeks) everyone will write a new set of digits on their checks. But, imagine if people just switched to a new year whenever they felt like it. Well, that's the way people adopted surnames: whenever they felt like it.

Which brings me to my great-great-great-grandmother.

I have in my possession a certified copy of an entry of marriage of 3 March 1838, from Monmouthshire, Wales, attesting to the marriage of Rachel, the daughter of Thomas Harris. The part of the form filled out by the

parish priest identifies the bride as "Rachel Thomas," using her father's first name as Rachel's last name. This is a nice, normal, traditional Welsh patronymic way to do things.

Rachel, however, had obviously decided to adopt one of those newfangled surnames, and she signed the form "Rachel Harris." I keep wondering if she and the priest glared at each other and shoved the register back and forth. "It's Harris." "It's Thomas." "No, it's Harris." Etc. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if voices were raised, despite the solemnity of the occasion. I come from a fairly feisty line of women.

Setting aside the question of whether this marriage was even legal (which is the kind of pesky detail that rarely concerned my ancestors, so why should it bother me at this late date?), the certificate records the very day--indeed, the golden moment--when patronymics was abandoned and a surname was officially adopted in one of my ancestral lines.

Eventually, of course, all of our ancestors adopted surnames, and except for Madonna and Cher, few of us these days try to get through life with only one name.

The lone patronymic holdout is the British royal family. The current heir to the throne of England was christened something like Charles Philip George Edward John David Reginald James Arthur Fenwick Stephen Vladimir Sherman. (It must take him a week to sign a check for the pizza-delivery guy.)

You may think that giving a poor defenseless baby such a long string

of first names was simply a royal affectation, like lifting the little pinkie while drinking tea, but we genealogists know better. We know it was because the guy was destined to become the Prince of Wales, and they wanted him to feel at home.



THE ZEN OF GENEALOGY: The Lighter Side of Genealogy, by Beth Maltbie Uyebara. The "Worm's Eye View of Genealogy" first appeared in "Missing Links" as a series of columns reflecting on the nuttier aspects of genealogy. Here's the lowdown on how to get contributions to a genealogy newsletter; how to win friends and dazzle your cousins with your research; how to kick the genealogy addiction; how to tell your kissing cousins from your dissing cousins; how to win the real Salt Lake City Olympic events; how to organize your paperwork—for good; how to combine yoga and genealogy for the ultimate out-of-body experience; how to get your spouse hooked on genealogy, too; and much more. Some "Worm's Eye View" columns are collected here together for the first time, along with new offerings. 2002, 125 pages, paper, \$13.95. Available on the web at <http://www.heritagebooks.com/> > item U2272.



Previously published in Missing Links, Volume 7, Number 49, 13 December 2002. Subscription information available at <<http://www.petuniapress.com>>.

~ *OF INTEREST* ~

RUTH CHRISTESON

We note with sadness the passing of Ruth (Coats) Christeson, a long-time member of *Questing Heirs*, on January 8, 2003.



QHGS FIELD TRIP

MaryEmma (Holley) Hargrave is coordinating a field trip to the Southern California Genealogical Society Library in Burbank. This library is not to be missed, as it contains over 30,000 books, manuscripts, maps, microforms, periodicals, and CDs. (See the article on page 15 for more information about the library.)

The trip will be on Saturday, February 22. The library will be open 10:00 am to 4:00 pm that day. We'll be meeting in the parking lot of the Resurrection Lutheran church near the corner of Cherry and Carson (where we have our meetings) at 8:00 am, and leave by 8:30.

In preparation, bring a completed pedigree chart, and have at least one family group sheet filled in for the family being searched. (Limit your search, but be prepared!) Also, you can either pack a lunch or snack, or have lunch at the Italian restaurant down the street.

We need drivers for this trip, so please help by signing up. Call MaryEmma at (562) 799-8857, or talk to her at the February meeting.



SCGS JAMBOREE

Due to the fact that the Southern California Genealogical Society Jamboree falls so early in the year, and because it now begins on Friday instead of Saturday, *Questing Heirs* will not be hosting an information table this year. However, we would like to suggest organizing carpools from our meeting site at Resurrection Lutheran Church on Saturday, March 1 at about 8:30 am. We will be bringing this up at the February meeting in order to finalize arrangements.

HAMBURG PASSENGER LISTS

Last month's featured speaker, Elaine Alexander, reminded us about the wonderful lists of passengers embarking from the port of Hamburg, Germany. Hamburg was and is a major port. While most of the passengers were from Germany and Eastern Europe (because the ports of Bremen, Amsterdam, and Le Havre would probably be the first choice for people from France, Switzerland, and the Low Countries), the Hamburg lists are fairly easy to check.

First question: where to find the Hamburg lists? The Los Angeles Family History Center has all of them on microfilm! You won't find them at the National Archives. Elaine reports that the Hamburg Emigration web site at http://www.hamburg.de/fhh/behoerden/staatsarchiv/link_to_your_roots/english/start.htm hopes to have the entire index available on the Internet by the end of 2003, but for now, only the years 1890 to 1920 can be searched from the web.

Second question: how do you use the Hamburg lists? There are two sets of indexes, called "direct" and "indirect." Since the concepts seem a bit vague, the best approach seems to be to search both sets. Each index is a set of microfilms covering 1856-1934 (missing 1915-1919). The index is by surname, but remember to check for alternate spellings. The index refers you to a date of emigration. There will be a microfilm covering that date, where you will find the actual entry, with information about the person's age, birthplace, occupation, and other information. You also get the name of the ship, and you will probably be able to locate the corresponding U. S. immigration list on the other end of the voyage. Most of the U. S. immigration passenger lists are also available at the Los Angeles Family History Center. The Hamburg lists are an important tool for finding your European ancestors, especially during the periods when most U. S. immigration passenger lists have not been indexed.



Grandchildren are God's way of thanking you for not killing your children.

~ ON THE WEB ~

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
<<http://www.scsgsgenealogy.com>>

With the QHGS field trip and the SCGS Jamboree coming up this month, you will want to be sure to take a look at the SCGS web page. There you will find a complete listing of the Library's holdings; a virtual tour of the facility; a master listing of events covering the many activities of the society; a featured article from the Society's award-winning bimonthly journal, *The Searcher*; a listing of the bookstore; and an on-line store for ordering genealogical books and equipment.

The following information is reprinted from their web page:

"The Southern California Genealogical Society was organized to foster interest in genealogy, preserve genealogical materials, and train researchers in effective and accurate techniques. The Society has attempted to meet these objectives by first and foremost maintaining one of the largest non-church and non-state supported genealogical libraries in the United States. It contains over 30,000 books, manuscripts, maps, microforms, periodicals, and CDs.

"The library serves as the Society headquarters and is the focal point for the many activities that we provide. These activities include programs with speakers of interest, beginning and intermediate genealogy classes, genealogy software users groups, meetings of various ethnic interest groups, indexing projects, and the publishing of our award winning journal, *The Searcher*.

"The SCGS Library is also home to the following collections:

- ◆ German Genealogical Society of America (one of the largest in the U. S.)
- ◆ Genealogical Society Hispanic America - Southern California Chapter
- ◆ French-Canadian Heritage Society of California (one of the largest in the U. S.)
- ◆ Los Angeles Historical Society

"Other highlights include:

- ◆ Over 5000 family history references in our books and manuscript collection.
- ◆ One of the largest collections of CDs in the country.
- ◆ Four high-speed computers for patrons to use to research CDs.
- ◆ One of the largest collections of genealogical, historical and family surname periodicals in the U. S.
- ◆ One of the few genealogy and family research bookstores in the Southern California area, with a varied selection of new and used books, forms, and charts."



DAR VOLUNTEERS OFFER LOOKUPS
<<http://boards.ancestry.com/mbexec?htx=board&r=rw&p=topics.organizations.dar>>

Do you think you may have an ancestor who served in the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783)? Would you like to know whether your ancestor is listed with the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) in the "Patriot Index?" A helpful group of NSDAR Volunteer Genies monitors the RootsWeb DAR Message Board every day and welcome any lookup request for your Revolutionary War ancestor.

Include your Patriot's first and last name, spouse's name (if known), dates of birth, death, and state of residence when posting your lookup request. You need not be interested in joining the NSDAR to request a lookup.

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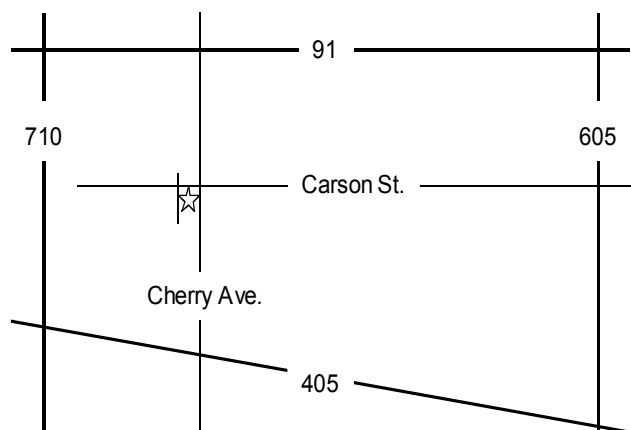


One of the advantages of being disorderly is that one is constantly making exciting discoveries.

-- A. A. Milne

~ **UPCOMING EVENTS** ~

- Saturday, February 1, 9:00 am-1:30 pm. Orange County, California Genealogical Society monthly meeting. Huntington Beach Central Library, 7111 Talbert Avenue.
- Saturday, February 8, 10:00 am-3:00 pm. South Bay Cities Genealogical Society 5th Annual Seminar. Knob Hill Community Center, Redondo Beach. Featuring Joan Lowrey speaking on "Organizing and Publishing a Family Genealogy Book."
- Sunday, February 16, 1:15 pm. Questing Heirs Genealogical Society monthly meeting. Parish Hall, Resurrection Lutheran Church, 1900 East Carson Street, Long Beach. Parking and entrance on Gardenia Avenue, one block west of Cherry Avenue. See page 10 for program information.
- Saturday, February 22, 2003, Questing Heirs Genealogical Society field trip. SCGS Library, Burbank. See page 14 for more information.
- Saturday, February 22, 2003, 9:00 am-4:00 pm. (Registration at 8:00 am.) Whittier Area Genealogical Society 21st Annual Seminar. Masonic Lodge, 7604 Greenleaf Avenue, Whittier. With speaker Katherine Scott Sturdevant. Topics include: The Immigrant Experience; Trailing Families: Westward Migration Patterns in Family History; Don't Throw It Away! Utilizing Artifacts in Family History Research and Writings; and Let Family Papers Speak for Themselves: Documentary Editing for Family Historians. For more information, contact Jean Bogart, Seminar Director, phone (626) 333-1194, email <BJCBogie@aol.com> or visit <<http://www.cagenweb/~kr/wags>>.



- Wednesday, February 19, 7:00 pm. South Bay Cities Genealogical Society monthly meeting. Torrance Civic Center Library, 3301 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance. Bill Principe speaking on "Accurate Vital Records."
- Sunday, February 23, 1:00 pm. BIFHS-USA monthly meeting at the Los Angeles FHC.*
- Friday, February 28, 2003, 1:00-9:00 pm & Saturday, March 1, 2003, 8:00 am-6:00 pm. Southern California Genealogical Society Jamboree. Pasadena Center, 300 E. Green Street at Marengo. Parking \$7.00. Exhibitors, software demonstrations, how-to lectures, picture restoration, maps, computer programs, CDs, old, new and used books, videos, new products which relate to the hobby of genealogy and family history. Speakers include: Michael Daigle, Bill Doty, Arlene Eakle, Wade Hone, Joan Lowrey, Andy Pomeroy, Don Ray, Barbara Renick, and Tom Underhill. Grand Door Prize: round-trip air fare to Salt Lake City and six nights at the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel. Donation: one day \$12.00, two days \$20.00. Phone (818) 843-7247 or visit <www.scgsgenealogy.org> for more information.

* FHC stands for Family History Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. FHCs are open free of charge to members of the general public interested in doing genealogical research. Volunteers are on hand and will gladly give you assistance. Regular hours for the Los Angeles FHC are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9 am to 9 pm, and Friday and Saturday 9 am to 5 pm. The LA FHC is located on the grounds of the Los Angeles Temple, 10741 Santa Monica Blvd. in West Los Angeles; their phone number is (310) 474-9990. Their web page at <<http://www.lafhc.org>> details their extensive collection. There are smaller FHCs locally, in Long Beach at 3701 Elm Avenue in Bixby Knolls, phone (562) 988-0509, in Los Alamitos, phone (714) 821-6914, and in Cerritos, phone (562) 924-3676. It is advisable to call ahead to the local centers, as their hours change from time to time.