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SILICON VALLEY COMPUTER GENEALOGY GROUP

PastFinder

Planning a research trip

By Richard Rands

We travel like business travelers, with laptops, electronic gadgets, and paperwork. We are the family historians, and when we travel, it's serious.

Summertime is on the horizon in the Northern Hemisphere, and you may have some free time that is just begging to be used for that long-anticipated trip to your ancestral home, or to the New England Historical and Genealogical Society (NEHGS) library in Boston. Or maybe even a stop off for a few days at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City on your way to a family reunion.

We have so many variations on the research travel theme that it is easy to overlook the pre-trip planning and to just jump in the car, train, or plane and leave the result to luck or divine intervention.

With or without preparation, chances are you will uncover something new along the way and will return home feeling somewhat satisfied. Then once you have processed the new information, it may become clear you could have been far more productive had you been more prepared. Then you will start feeling the need to return, although you have other trips to make, and so little time.

Janet and I have made uncounted research trips over the years and have run into plenty of difficulties that could have been averted by planning ahead, so this article is a review of some of the basic things we have learned to include in our planning process.

To begin, group the types of trips into five categories:

1. **Day-to-day research** at home or nearby
2. **Unexpected encounters** when we are not doing formal research
3. Research at **local** public libraries, court houses, archives, or Family



History Centers

4. Research at **distant** public libraries, archives, court houses, ancestral lands, churches, and other repositories

5. Research trips to **major repositories**, including the National Archives (NARA) at Washington, DC; the Family History Library at Salt Lake City, Utah; The National Archives of the United Kingdom at Kew, Surrey, England; the NEHGS library at Boston, Massachusetts; and the Allen County Public Library at Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Each of these circumstances is unique enough that the pre-planning steps should be slightly different. For example, when you are doing day-to-day research near your home, it isn't as critical to have a power extension cord in your gear, but when you are at a distant

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Planning a research trip *(continued)*

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public library and all of the power outlets are in use by other patrons, you may wish that you could plug in your laptop near your workspace.

We ran into that precise challenge one time when we travelled to the coastal town of Santa Cruz, California, to do research in the city library. Apparently the public library in Santa Cruz caters to a large number of individuals who do not have the Internet at home, so every power outlet was in use. We were forced to wait until nearly closing time before an outlet became available. It was difficult to watch people doing frivolous things on plugged-in laptops without any visible sense of purpose.

This situation can be prevented, in part, by charging laptops fully before using them in a library, and by traveling with a mobile device that has self-contained Internet access and portable battery backup power. The public library in Bath, England, lacks public access to power; we were reprimanded for plugging our laptops into wall outlets.

So the first topic to think about is where you will be working. Make a list of the facilities you expect to visit and check ahead of time for operating days, open hours, and days they are closed. Otherwise, you may be planning to do research on bank holidays (national holidays in England), or religious holidays such as All Saints Day, which may not be noted in the United States.

For each facility, identify the essential equipment available to the public, including copiers, scanners, wireless Internet access, workspace, and power outlets. Check for payment methods for each service, since that may require you to use cash and coins.

Also ask about parking or public transportation, proximity to restaurants, and, if necessary, handicap accessibility. Determine policies regarding identification, approved personal equipment, carrying cases, acceptable clothing, and research materials. Many sites do not allow certain types of clothing and materials into the research rooms. Many allow you to bring only a laptop or tablet and a power cord into a research room; expect to leave any bags, carrying cases, and outerwear in a locker on site.

Be prepared to join the facility's sponsoring membership organization at a facility such as the Society of Genealogists in London, England. Also, when you

enter the U.S. National Archives research area, you will be required to view a video, pass a simple test after the video, and then register as a researcher. The researcher card will be scanned at various points in the archives to monitor your comings and goings.

Furthermore, archive policy might prohibit certain outerwear such as coats, hats, and scarves, as well as most carrying cases. Most formal archives will not allow any writing device except a pencil, so be prepared with pencils (typically, a mechanical pencil is fine, but you may need to demonstrate that it is not a pen).

Some research facilities are well-equipped with virtually every thing you might need. For example, the Family History Library in Salt Lake City has hosted so many patrons arriving unprepared, they go to great lengths to be prepared for every conceivable need. You can even purchase a flash drive from them. However, some facilities that are not necessarily aimed at genealogical research, such as court houses, or churches, expect you to be prepared. Search their web pages or telephone the facility ahead of time to avoid wasting time.

Before considering all of the tools and equipment you might want to take on a research trip, remember that **local libraries and historical societies typically maintain a local history section in their repositories.** These are usually a rarely used back room in the library where the library houses folders, boxes, binders, or albums crammed with family history materials, all donated by local residents current and past. If no one in the family wanted the materials, sometimes the family papers were donated to the local library.

When Janet and I did research in several New England states, we stopped at every library we could find (even those we had not identified before the trip) and asked the librarian to let us access the local history room. Usually they dug a key out of the back of a desk drawer and took us back to a room that seemed like it hadn't been opened recently (i.e., lots of dust and cobwebs). They pointed us toward rows of book shelves, boxes, and filing cabinets and said something like, "This is it. We haven't had time to catalog any of it, but you are welcome to search for anything that might be of help."

Believe me! These collections are not likely ever to be catalogued, much less digitized and posted online.

(Continued on page 3)



Planning a research trip *(continued)*

(Continued from page 2)

You might find relevant family history material that will knock your socks off. In bygone generations, it was a common practice to create scrapbooks of newspaper clippings and other notable information relevant to family members. Those scrapbooks often were left to a local library and placed in a local history collection. I highly encourage you to reserve sufficient time to check out as many local libraries as you can when traveling around your ancestral territory.

The **tools and equipment** you should include on a checklist will depend on your means of travel. If you will be flying on any segment of the trip, luggage limitations will dictate how much you can carry. Travel by road or rail offers more flexibility.

My checklist contains about 30 items that fall into two major categories. The first group covers the materials I use for the **genealogical aspect** of my work, including mechanical pencils, lead, erasers, charts, worksheets, a ruler, magnifying glass, paper-clips, folders, spiral bound notebook, stapler, extra staples, calculator (or calculator app on a smartphone), laptop and associated peripherals (including power cord, mouse, portable scanner, and portable printer — see next column), digital camera, and copies of the most relevant documents or research helps for the area. Most of these items can be listed easily by sitting at your usual workspace and looking around at all the things you keep at your fingertips as you do research at home.

We each travel with one computer bag small enough to be hand luggage but large enough to carry the equipment. We never check these bags as luggage, as the equipment is fragile and valuable.

The second half of my checklist consists of dozens of items that I have ended up needing because of some **unexpected problem**. It is on this checklist that I include spare batteries, a small set of screwdrivers, a heavy-duty clear plastic bag, a variety of computer cables with varying sizes of connectors, extra flash drives, an extension cord, a 3-prong-to-2-prong power converter plug, a flashlight, a bag of quarters, a small power strip, a first aid kit, fingernail clippers, envelopes of varying sizes, postage stamps, noise reduction earbuds, sponge earplugs, sewing kit, critical medications, library cards, research cards, alarm clock, family address book with telephone numbers, spare eyeglasses, local maps, a shaving kit, and my passport. Janet carries a similar

bag, minus the shaving kit.

Each item has the potential of salvaging a bad situation and making the research time go smoothly. I also stock my bag with my favorite chocolate!

If you will be traveling in foreign countries, don't forget the converter plugs that make it possible to connect to local power outlets. Verify that all your electronic equipment will handle dual voltage and frequency. We have lost valuable research time driving around a strange town looking for a store that carried one of these items.

If you are traveling abroad, consider adding international calling to your cell phone, or leasing a cell phone at your destination. Plans vary considerably. For us, the least expensive option often is for our cellular provider to enable international calling on one cell phone for the duration of our trip. We bypass international data plans, however, and instead use the wifi at hotels and libraries abroad. These arrangements need to be made before the trip.

Finally, consider some optional equipment that can be extremely helpful. We have a lightweight portable flatbed scanner that is powered through a USB port on a laptop computer. The scanner is about the same size as a laptop computer and fits in a computer bag beside a laptop. When documents are in extremely bad shape with lots of tears and folds, a handheld wand-type scanner is not as useful as this flatbed, although we do take it on some trips.

We also depend heavily on our GPS unit—not only for getting directions, but for pinpointing gravesites and locating places to eat. We use it cautiously.

A smartphone can fill in for some of the items on these lists.

To photograph artifacts or old documents, especially those that are faded, are written in difficult-to-read handwriting, or have fine details, we use a good digital camera. Many smartphones and newer cell phones have good cameras, but they use autofocus and cannot be focused manually.

The best results are possible sometimes only with manual focus, because autofocus is designed for photography in three dimensions, when the varying depth of the image allows the electronics of the camera to focus. The flatness of documents can prevent autofocus from generating useful images.

Practice with your equipment before your trip, to avoid unpleasant surprises on the road. *Bon voyage!*



Labs.familysearch.org *Standard Finder*

By Lesly Klippel

Yes, it does still exist.

Labs is the website where FamilySearch.org (the official family history website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) places programs in development on which they would appreciate feedback.

Through the years, many programs have come and gone from this site. Some of them have progressed to the main FamilySearch site, and some have been discarded.

One program that has stayed on Labs is the **Standard Finder**, a list of names, locations, and dates. It is the database that gives you the complete, standardized version of a place name when you start typing a location into FamilySearch Family Tree. It also can be used to provide variant spellings of both given and surnames in various languages and is useful for indexers when a place name is difficult to decipher.

To find this fun application, go to the website www.labs.familysearch.org and click on Standard Finder. You can search for a name, a date, or a place name. Searching for a given name such as *David* in the default culture (North America) brings up a remarkable list of more than 100 variants of the name — ways that FamilySearch has found it spelled. Change the culture to British Isles and the list grows longer. Variations include *dave*, *daved*, *davitt*, *da-viess*, *davies*, and misspellings such as *daavid*, *dabid*, *davii*, *davio*, and *tavid*.

The list of 25 possible culture choices includes various European countries, Asia, Africa, China, and

Japan. Apparently *David* is not a name found in China, Japan, or Wales. This list of possible spellings of various given names and surnames gives a new dimension to a web search and inspires new uses for wildcards, such as * and ?, in Internet searches.

The Date tab seems to standardize the format of a date and declare whether it is possible. Finder wisely declared the date *31 Apr 1900* as false, for example. However, it did not reject the 10 days in September 1752 that were skipped when the Gregorian calendar was adopted.

In the place search, I used my favorite obscure place, Tinsley Bottom, where my Fowler family had a thriving saltpetre mining business in the early 1800s. Standard

Finder found the name and correctly placed it in Clay County, Tennessee, after 1870 and in Jackson County, Tennessee, in the earlier time period.

This is a very handy location tool for finding information about a small place that no longer exists on any current map. Clicking on Clay, Tennessee, United States, brings up a list of all the counties in Tennessee, with variant spellings and the standardized spelling that FamilySearch prefers.

The place name list can help you standardize the place name spellings in your computer genealogy database, making it easier to link your data correctly with FamilySearch Family Tree.

Play around with Standard Finder — it may help you figure out a sticky place or name problem. 



The Standard Finder search utility (above) and results for the author's Tinsley Bottom search (a continuous block is broken into two segments for display, below).

Higher level places	Name variants	Place type	Place time period
Results found: 2			
Tinsley Bottom, Clay, Tennessee, United States	tinsleybottom, tinsleysbottom,	Type: Stream Bend Code: STMB FC: H	1870-
Tinsley Bottom, Jackson, Tennessee, United States	tinsleybottom, tinsleysbottom,	Type: Stream Bend Code: STMB FC: H	1801-

Standard text	Culture	Iso code	Geo code	Identification number
Tinsley Bottom, Clay, Tennessee, United States	North America	US-TN	36.48 N 85.59472 W	1208281
Tinsley Bottom, Jackson, Tennessee, United States	North America	US-TN	36.48 N 85.59472 W	1208281



How to find it *Identifying a wife's correct name*

By Richard Rands

This is a new variation on “How I Found It”— a variation that will highlight new or unusual record collections and frequently overlooked websites and record sources.

A few weeks ago I was faced with a problem of identifying the correct name of the wife of a Joseph George Manning, who had been born in Bristol, England, in 1832, immigrating to America sometime after 1851, and dying in San Francisco, California, in 1890.

Family records suggested that he had married a woman named Emily, Emma, or Annie. No one had looked in the obvious places such as U.S. Census records or marriage records. I located Joseph Manning in the 1870 and 1800 U.S. censuses, listed with his wife, Emma. Since family records indicated that Joseph died in 1890, Emma Manning was listed as a widow in both the 1900 and 1910 U.S. censuses.

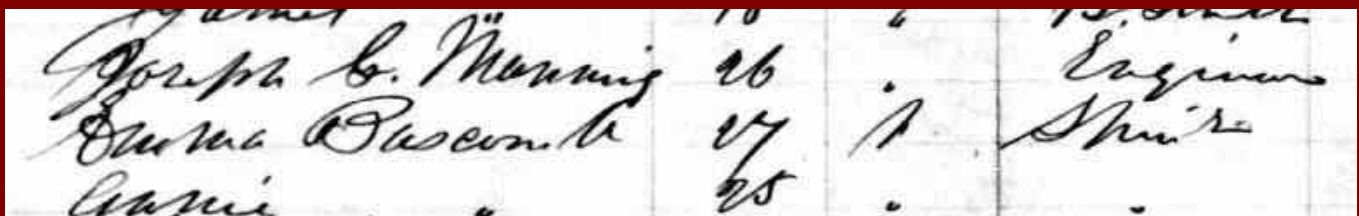
This confirmed that Joseph had married a woman named Emma. But could he have married an Emily or an Annie before that? Or could these be alternate names that Emma occasionally used? I set out to locate documents that would clarify Emily, Emma, and Annie.

It was not clear from the family information whether Joseph and Emma had married in England prior to emigration, or if they had married in the United States. A search of passenger lists in the Immigration collections at Ancestry.com resolved part of the question when I found a record of Joseph Manning arriving in Boston aboard the ship *George Washington* on 20 September 1857.

The next entries in the passenger list turned out to be two unmarried sisters traveling together, Emma Bascomb and Annie Bascomb. It was Emma Bascomb who married Joseph. I now knew that Joseph and Emma traveled on the same ship from Liverpool to Boston and that Emma was single at the time. Annie Bascomb was listed in the 1900 U.S. Census as living with her widowed sister, Emma.

I also had an idea about how family lore had picked up the name *Annie*. In any case, Annie was single when she arrived in Boston and still single in 1900, well after Joseph had died. As for the name *Emily*, I noted a record of an Emily Jane Manning, who was born about the same time and place as Joseph Manning, but who eventually married a Thomas Manning and appeared in the U.K. censuses until her death. A

(Continued on page 6)



Above: Passenger list for the ship *George Washington* upon arrival 20 April 1857 at Boston, listing Joseph G. Manning and the single sisters, Emma and Annie Bascomb Below: Emma's funeral record.

FUNERAL RECORD			
NO. OF FUNERAL	379	DATE	April 21, 1913
Name of deceased	Emma Manning		
Charge to	J. H. Manning	Ordered by	Miss Manning
	Address 343 Sanson St		Address
Age	87 Years 1 Month 15 Days	Remarks	
Late Residence	1702 Union St.		
Place of Death	"		Ashes to 1702 Union St.
Place of Birth	Bristol, England		4/22/13
Date of Death	April 18, 1913		

Whadya think this is?

This item may be a component in answering genealogy questions. Whaddya think it is? (More than one answer may be correct.)

- A. A page from Griffiths Evaluation
- B. A list of Irish AARP members in Blackhill and Boly parishes.

- C. A page from the Irish Tithe Applotment records
- D. A tally of first- through fourth-class passengers traveling on a ship, listing the amount of the fare paid in Advance, Received upon departure, and to be Paid upon arrival (ARP).

(Answer is on page 8.)

No.	TOWNLANDS AND OCCUPIERS NAMES.	1st Class at 2 ¹ / ₂ per			2nd Class at 1 ¹ / ₈ per			3rd Class at 1 ¹ / ₂ per			4th Class at 6 ¹ / ₂ per			Gross Amount of Acres.			Amount of Tithe Composition.			OBSERVATIONS.
		A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	
	<i>Blackhill</i>																			
	<i>Am't for forward</i>	10	2	8	38	0	22	43	3	50	3	2	0	764	0	0	67	10	6 ¹ / ₂	8
15	<i>Phelan James</i>				1	2		1	1	9							3	11	16	
16	<i>Phelan Michael</i>				3			1									1	6 ¹ / ₂	17	
17	<i>Quigly Nycan</i>				3			1	29								1	8 ¹ / ₂	15	
18	<i>Shillif John</i>	2			8			7	3	7	2	2					1	7	3	19
		12	2	8	49	0	22	53	2	35	6	0	0	121	1	25	8	9	3 ¹ / ₂	✓
	<i>Boly</i>																			
1	<i>Brophy Peter</i>	1	1	3 ¹ / ₄													3	0 ¹ / ₂	20	
2	<i>Brophy Thomas</i>		3	3 ¹ / ₄													2		21	
3	<i>Brophy William</i>						2										2	2	25	

How to find it (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

careless family historian easily could have mistaken her for someone married to Joseph.

To tidy up loose ends, I followed Emma until her death in 1913 in San Francisco, California, just to see if she might have remarried after Joseph died. She and Joseph had three children on record, Irene Ella (daughter born in 1858 in Iowa), Annie Louise (daughter, 1860, Iowa), and Francis Joseph Henry (son, 1865, San Francisco). Francis used the initials *F. J. H.* in multiple records. In the 1910 U.S. Census for San Francisco, Emma was residing with her son and was listed as his 82-year-old widowed mother. Annie Bascomb was listed as his aunt.

An unusual digitized and indexed record collection that FamilySearch.org lists in its California collection is the San Francisco Area Funeral Home Records, 1835-1979.

The description of the collection explains that

“images for all years in the collection can be browsed, but the name index currently covers only 1896 through 1931. The collection includes a number of different funeral homes acquired over time by the Halsted N Gray - Carew & English Mortuary company, most from the San Francisco area, but also including some from Burlingame, Stockton, and Sacramento. The collection includes funeral register books, burial registers, account books, case books, etc.”

I decided to see if, by chance, Emma's burial details might be found in this wonderful collection. Sure enough, funeral record 379 contained the cremation details for Emma Manning, who died 18 April 1913 at age 87 years, 1 month, and 15 days, which translates precisely back to Emma's birth date of 3 Mar 1826, as listed in family records.

Furthermore, the expenses of the burial were charged to *F. J. H. Manning*.

Case closed! 



Ask the Doctor

Back up, get prepared

Q My genealogy database software asks me if I want to create a backup every time I close the program. Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don't. What should I be doing?

Backing up is as important as creating your files in the first place. Creating a backup on or near your local computer is important, but strategies have emerged over the years for more secure backup.

First, if you have made changes to your database since your last backup, save it locally — in other words, keep a copy of your file where you can access the copy readily. If a file gets corrupted or deleted, you can find the file quickly on a backup drive. To back up your entire desktop or laptop computer, you may want to consider an external drive.

The Doctor and his household use backup drives for backups that stay in the house. The Doctor's household also uses an online remote ("cloud") backup service that backs up our computers every night, in the middle of the night. Remote backup services are numerous. Standard cost of remote backup is about \$5 per month.

Some people are moving their computer backup to Dropbox. This site can be a good way to share files and back up important files, but it is not designed for something as extensive as a mirror-drive backup of your entire system. Restoring files from Dropbox is a far slower and more tedious process than restoring from an external drive or a remote backup service.

Q You probably have made many research trips over the years. My husband and I are planning a week-long first trip to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. What would you suggest we bring and how should we prepare?

Since the Family History Library is one of the oldest genealogical institutions in the country, its staff has dealt with virtually every level of preparation, or lack of it, you can imagine. The FHL staff is particularly adept at dealing with off-the-street walkers who are starting from scratch. However, for a researcher who has higher expectations, The Doctor recommends the following:

Before you go, prepare a list of **a dozen or so research problems** to concentrate on. Spend some time on each one to familiarize yourself with the is-

ssues that make it a dead-end or a problem. Bring with you a file or folder containing the relevant details about each problem so that you can be ready quickly to go to work on them. Prioritize the list.

Organize your list of research problems by the floors at the library. You will see that there is a floor for international (European, Scandinavian, and Latin American) research; another floor for British Isles; a floor for U.S. and Canada microfilms; and a floor containing U.S. books and maps. The materials' locations do change at times but are somewhat stable. Although it is not impossible, bouncing from floor to floor doing research will slow you down.

Each floor has a **reference and help desk** where experts and volunteers are available to help. Don't hesitate to use their help. Also, each floor has a significant number of desktop computers with access to the Internet and a variety of genealogical services.

You will find large tables where you can spread out your material and plug in your own laptop. You will find rows of **microfilm readers**, a few microfiche readers, and many cabinets filled with numerically arranged **microfilms** relating to the floor's topic. The floors also have a limited amount of specialized equipment for digitizing microfilm images, or scanning items from printed material.

Except for a small number of highly specialized microfilms, you are free to determine which films you wish to look at, find them in the rows of film cabinets, and pull what you want, all entirely on your own. Of course, you will be expected to **return the films** to the correct cabinets when you are done. You can pull many films at one time, if you want.

You will find pencils and scratch paper at every computer. You can purchase flash drives on the main floor. Each computer has a **USB port** prominently available for saving files and images, such as those from the Internet or the FHL catalog listings.

The main floor has a room with **food** vending machines, located near **lockers** where you can stash your personal belongings all day. All floors have accessible **restrooms**.


The library has **free research classes** almost every day, with a schedule posted near the elevators. Above all, plenty of volunteers and experts are ready to help you. The FHL is about as ready for you as it can be. You just need to have a good handle on how you want to spend your time. 

What didja think it was? And were ya right?

ANSWER to question posed on page 6: A and C.

The Tithe Applotment records in Ireland, also known as Griffith's Evaluation, was a survey of a large portion of the Irish country that identified the amount of land each land owner possessed and how much each piece of property would be taxed for the church. The four categories of land were based on soil fertility and ease of land use, each with a different tax rate.

The columns *A*, *R*, and *P* represent the size of the plot of land measured in acres, rods, and perches. The tax rate for each


class of land is noted at the top of the column, and the total tax for each land owner is computed in the last column. 

PastFinder *named best in U.S. again*

The SVC GG newsletter *PastFinder* has been named best in the U.S. by the National Genealogical Society. This year, it shares the first-place honor with a quarterly journal published by the Sacramento German Genealogical Society

PastFinder has been named first in its category since it was first submitted for consideration in 2012. The eight-page newsletter has been publishing for more than 25 years.

Its initial first-place award, reflecting the editorial term of former editor-in-chief Allin Kingsbury, was in 2012, in the Local Society category. Since then, it has won first place in the Major Society category.

Frequent authors include Lesly Klippel, Richard Rands, Pamela Erickson, Pam Brigham, Pat Burrow, and Janet Brigham (current editor-in-chief). Other SVC GG members are welcome to contact SVC GG about possible articles. 

Upcoming meetings

The Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group meets monthly except December, on the second Saturday of the month from 9 to 11 A.M. at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 875 Quince Ave., Santa Clara, California (see map at right).

The group is not affiliated with any church or other organization.

10 May 2014, 9–11 A.M.

- Quaker Research
- New apps for genealogy
- Genealogy on a Mac
- Research with Lesly (Klippel)
- Getting started in genealogy

14 June 2014, 9–11 A.M.

- Family keepsakes: identifying collections
- Family history on a tablet
- Family curating with a Mac
- Research with Lesly
- Getting started in genealogy

PastFinder

First place, Major Society Newsletter, 2013-14

First place, Local Society Newsletter, 2012

National Genealogical Society

Website: www.svcgg.org

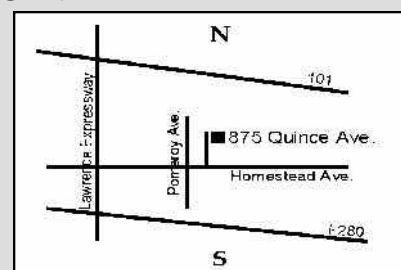
Email: siliconvalleygroup@earthlink.net

Postal mail: P.O. Box 23670, San Jose, CA 95153-3670

Officers and staff

Richard Rands	President rrands@earthlink.net 650-969-6567
Janet Brigham	Vice-president Newsletter editor jzbrands@earthlink.net
Wanda Levy	Secretary
Carleen Foster	Treasurer
Lesly Klippel	Membership director leslyklippel@gmail.com
Brian Smith	Program chair bsmith4gen@yahoo.com
Pat Burrow	Board member at large
Bill Weller	Webmaster
Leland Osburn	Education administrator
Pamela Erickson	Assistant editor
Betsy Shafer	Assistant editor
Allin Kingsbury	Editor emeritus/ past president

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Meeting site has ample free off-street parking, with a wheelchair-accessible entrance at the front.

About the Silicon Valley Computer Genealogy Group

SVC GG is the former Silicon Valley PAF Users Group, a nonprofit group of some 600 genealogy enthusiasts. We are based in Silicon Valley in the Bay Area of northern California; members live all over the world.

SVC GG offers classes, seminars, and publications to help family his-

torians improve their skills in using technology for genealogy research.

PastFinder is published monthly except December. It is distributed at meetings to members and mailed to others after the meetings. Members can receive the newsletter digitally by emailed link. 