

Finding Family – March 2019

So What's Next?

By Sue Ziemski & Nancy Levenberg

As many people have discovered, researching your family tree can be challenging and the process can become addictive. Once you start it is hard to let it go even when you hit a road block.

Whether you are stuck or just curious, the community of Napa is fortunate to have two organizations that can help with research. The Napa Valley Genealogical Society can offer numerous resources for family research; and the Napa County Historical Society has the resources to give life to the people, buildings and businesses that made Napa what it is today. Both the Genealogical Society's and the Historical Society's holdings are public non-circulating libraries.

The Genealogical Society was founded in 1974 and has been improving and growing since then. The Society has a large library containing information from each state, many other countries and individual families. It is also a depository for research completed by its members. The Society catalog can be accessed from any computer at their website www.napavalleygenalogy.org. The catalog can be searched by subject, title or author.

The Society building at 1701 Menlo Avenue on the corner of California Avenue is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm with staff members available to assist with any questions. Some Saturdays are available. Call ahead for Saturday openings during regular hours at 707-252-2252.

There are public computers available with many subscription services such as Ancestry, Fold 3.com (military records), newspapers.com (national and international newspapers), New England genealogy records and other internet sites. In addition there are historical maps, cemetery records, school records, voting lists, passenger lists and much more local information. The library also receives and archives publications from other genealogy organizations operating in all fifty states. Some of these organizations have been publishing genealogical information since the 1800's.

Through your research at the Napa Valley Genealogical Society you have identified generation after generation of your family tree. Through the subscription services you have located newspaper articles. You have discovered military information. You may even have located a family history from the numerous volumes located in the stacks. So what's next?

Names are only the beginning - what brought them to Napa, where did they live, where did they go to school, where did they work, what were their lives like, what did Napa look like when they arrived? The Napa County Historical Society can help you research that additional information.

The Historical Society has two research locations: the Juarez building at Tulocay Cemetery and the Goodman Library located at 1219 First Street in downtown Napa. The Tulocay office is open on Tuesday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. The Goodman Library is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10-4. Appointments are offered at both locations.

NCHS has thousands of photographs digitized online on their website at www.napahistory.org. These are available for purchase in print or digital version. Their collections include yearbooks, newspapers, telephone books, manuscripts, books, maps, blueprints, business records, organizations' records, county and city records, winery information and much more.

You may find a photograph of your ancestor or a photograph of a family home or business. You may find a manuscript of a family memoir. You may find a history of the development of the business or industry where your ancestor was employed. You may discover your family member was a volunteer firefighter, served in city or county government or was a steamboat captain. All of this information is waiting to be discovered.