

MARIENTAL & LOUIS

DAYS OF YORE

JULY 2004

ISSUE THREE



Index

- Editor's Comments
- German-Russian Proverb
- Feature Stories
- Whisper
- Favorite URL's
- My favorite poem

German-Russian Proverb:

Make yourself
better, or
you'll stay
that way!

Another quarter has passed and it is again time for my newsletter. I have been away for the summer, but will still try to publish my newsletter, although it will be late. We were visiting in Cleveland, Ohio, for several days, and we were told that there had been a rather large German-Russian area in that city – a beautiful city with many large homes in or around the “hundred year old” era. They are three or four stories tall, and each has their own personality.

There are also many other areas of different nationalities. One, I noticed, was an Italian area. They had painted the tree trunks in the colors of their flag. They are very proud of their heritage, also.

We Are The Chosen

My feelings are, that in each family there are those who seem called to find their ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again. To tell their story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts, but breathing life into all who have gone before us. They cry out: Tell our story. So, we do.

In finding them, we somehow find ourselves. How many graves have I stood before now and cried? I have lost count. How many times have I told my ancestors you have a wonderful family, you would be proud of us? How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow there was love there for us? I cannot say.

It goes beyond just documenting facts. It goes to who we are and why we do the things we do. It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying I can't let this happen. The folks here are bones of my bones and flesh of my flesh. It goes to doing something about it. It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish. How they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their

hardships and losses. They're never giving up or never giving in. Their resoluteness is to go on and build a life for their family.

With love and caring we record each fact of their existence. And, because, we are them and they are us, we might be born so that we might remember them. So, we the chosen tell their story.

Lloyd Ray Timmons, Sr.

The Clothes Knows: How to tell that old photograph's era.

By Elizabeth Jardina, Staff Writer for the Alameda Times-Star

Perhaps when you find them, they're stuffed into boxes in the back of an attic. Maybe they're in an album, tucked among the curled, yellowing pages. Maybe they've been hanging on the wall of a relative for years, and you've never given them a second thought.

They're black and white photos of stiffly posed people. You know they're important, they're your forebears, but you have no idea where to begin in deciphering who they are.

Period dressmaker and 19th century clothing enthusiast Shirley Joliff, who recently brought her knowledge to the San Mateo County History Museum for a program called "The Dating Game", says she's looked at many old photo's trying to help people figure out identities.

"People want to know if it's Grandma or Great-Grandma", she says. While photo's taken before, say, 1920, look simply old-fashioned to many people, Jolliff emphasizes that styles changed dramatically in the 19th century as they did in the 20th. "You wouldn't mistake someone from the 1930's for someone from the 1960's" she says. "The 19th century was no different." Jolliff says she got involved in period dressmaking while participating in a Civil War re-enactment group near her home in Del Rey Oaks, near Monterey. "I liked shooting guns more than the dresses," she says. But after becoming involved in the volunteer docent program at San Juan Bautista State Park, she decided that she liked wearing period clothing. "You can't go to J.C. Penny and

find them, so I decided I'd make them," she says, so I decided I'd make them," she says. "I'd always done art projects, and this was sort of a variation on an art project."

In the process, she learned the nitty-gritty of the 19th century clothing, with the help of much research. She recommends and often refers to the book "American Victorian Costumes in Early Photographs" (Dover Publications, \$14.95).

The hardest type of heirloom photograph to date is a photo of just a man's head. "You can't really go by men's hair except in the 1840's, clean-shaven, parted on the sides," she says. "The easiest photograph to date is of a young woman, they're usually going to be the most stylish," she says.

The fashionable young woman of the 1840's would have her hair in a center part with loops over her ears, a style unflatteringly dubbed "spaniel ears", and a bun in the back. Sleeves were tight, bodices of dresses had vertical shirring and waistlines came to a downward point.

For men, suits were fitted at the waists, with full shirts.

In the 1850's, clothes loosened up. Tight sleeves on women's dresses were replaced with enormous ones, especially loose in the elbows with bell-shaped wrists. The spaniel ears were still there, although they were falling out of fashion. Ruffles were quite fashionable. Men's suits had evolved into morning coats, short in the front with long tails in the back.

By the 1860's - the era of the Civil War - "skirts were enlarging," Jolliff says, a result of the invention of the hoop skirt. "Before that, there were layers and layers of starched petticoats, " as many as 40 pounds worth, she says." Before the hoop, England was trying to enact a law limiting women's underwear to 35 pounds." She says. But replacing skirt's heavy underpinnings with a lightweight hoop allowed women to wear them full without discomfort. "By the 1860's, it was "Wow! How big can my skirt go?"

Hair had lost the loopy look altogether and was now plastered down in a center part - despite the hair in Civil War-era movies such as "Cold Mountain", in which Nicole Kidman's strawberry-

blond ringlets cannot be contained. Men's suit jackets were oversized, looking almost too big.

Because of movies like "Gone With The Wind", the 1860's are a familiar period to many people. Although the 1939 Vivien Leigh film is fairly accurate, Jolliff says, the scene in which Scarlett pulls down the sleeves of her gown to reveal her shoulders would never have happened. "Off-the-shoulders was a child's neckline," Jolliff says.

When trying to identify photos of children, don't be surprised if there are a lot of dresses. Regardless of their sex, children wore dresses until they were 6 or 7 well into the 20th century. "I have a picture of my dad in a dress," Jolliff says. "He was born in 1915". This fact surprised San Mateo resident Dona Cowan, who brought in 1890s-era photo of her husband's uncles as children to show Jolliff. "I saw boys dressed in skirts and dresses, and I found it rather strange, but it was the custom," she says. The way to figure out the gender of skirted children in old photos is to look at their hair; boys' hair was parted on the side, and girls had center parts.

In the 1870's, dresses shrunk down from the height of their crinoline-filled plumpness. The full skirt evolved into a bustle, only big in the back. And the dominance of the center-parted hairstyle on women was usurped by a love of hair. Women piled hair of all sorts on top of their heads – even adding hairpieces that didn't match their hair. "The look was lots of hair," Jolliff says. "It didn't matter whose hair."

By the end of the 1870's, women's skirts were quite narrow. The bustle returned by the 1880's, but it was lower and stuck straight out. "They say you could put a tea service on it," Jolliff says. Bodices were tighter and more masculine, often with a long row of buttons on the front. Cowan also brought in a photo of her grandmother's family, which had the date of 1889 written all over it. The most fashionable people in the photo are her grandmother's older sisters, who stand in the back with a large row of buttons down the front of their dresses. Cutting

buttonholes in dresses, Jolliff explained, made it hard to reuse the fabric when you had to cut up last year's dress and re-make it into the fashion of the moment. So buttons were often decorative; the fasteners were often hooks and eyes.

In the 1890's, puffed sleeves were most distinctive characteristic of women's clothing. Also, men were wearing suits that looked almost indistinguishable from modern suits.

Women's hats were getting larger and more decorative. "You'd see hats with entire seagulls on them," Jolliff says. "By the 1910's, skirts were tubular and hats went high."

If you have a photo that you want to identify and don't know where to start, a costume book such as "American Victorian Costumes in Early Photographs" is a good beginning. Also, genealogy societies, such as the San Francisco Genealogy Society, may be of some help. Their web site is <http://www.sfgenealogy.com>

Studying the photo carefully is probably your most valuable tool. Look at the people - what they're wearing, what their hair looks like - and then compare it to photographs in books. Also, you may see glimmers of personality past the generally staid faces in 19th century photography. "Those people are no different than the people of today," Jolliff says.

Try to forgive the grim faces. Remember that in order to be photographed, people would have to sit still for 30 seconds or more, even in the latter part of the century. "People started smiling when photography got faster," Jolliff says.

You can e-mail Elisabeth Jardina at ejardina@sanmateocounty-times.com or call (650) 348-4377.

A few favorite URL'S:

<http://www.volgagerman.net>

<http://www.rootsweb.com>

<http://www.mariental-louis.com>

<http://www.MyAncestors.net>

WHISPER

Notebooks For Research Trips

When preparing for a research trip, I make a notebook up for that trip. In the notebook, I place family group sheets and notes on the families that I am re-researching, maps of areas, cemetery printouts from my genealogy software with lists of people I am searching in each cemetery, and anything else I might find pertinent to the trip.

I "comb bind" these notebooks and take them along. I don't have to worry about losing papers or having them blow away. I can take the notebook anywhere, make more notes, track my research, or see at a glance who I want to search for.

When the trip is finished, the notebooks can be saved for further reference on a shelf or stashed in a family file.

Karen Krugman

THE SWEETEST OF NIGHTS AND THE FINEST OF DAYS
I WISH YOU, I WISH YOU
I WISH YOU THESE WISHES
COOL DRINKS IN YOUR GLASSES
WARM FOOD IN YOUR DISHES
PEOPLE TO NOURISH, CHERISH, AND LOVE YOU
A LAMP IN THE WINDOW TO LIGHT YOUR WAY HOME IN A HAZE
I WISH YOU THE SWEETEST OF NIGHTS AND THE FINEST OF
DAYS

I WISH YOU, I WISH YOU
A TALENT FOR LIVING
DELIGHT IN THE GETTING, DELIGHT IN THE GIVING
A SONG IN YOUR SOUL, AND SOMEONE TO HEAR IT
THE WISDOM TO FIND THE RIGHT PATH WHEN YOU'RE LOST IN
A HAZE
I WISH YOU THE SWEETEST OF NIGHTS AND THE FINEST OF
DAYS

A SNUG ROOF ABOVE YOU, A STRONG SELF INSIDE YOU
THE COURAGE TO GO WHERE YOU KNOW YOU MUST GO
A GOOD HEART TO GUIDE YOU
AND GOOD FRIENDS BESIDE YOU

I WISH YOU, I WISH YOU
A DREAM WORTH THE DOING
AND FORTUNE'S FACE SMILING ON ALL YOUR PURSUING
AND PLEASURES THAT FAR, FAR,
OUTWEIGH YOUR SMALL SORROWS
ARMS WIDE TO EMBRACE YOUR TOMORROW'S
A LONG SUNLIT SAIL ON THE BLUEST
AND SMOOTHEST OF BAYS
I WISH YOU THE SWEETEST OF NIGHTS AND THE FINEST OF
DAYS

FROM JUDITH VIORST'S COLLECTION OF POEMS

WHISPER:

From the [Genie Angels](#) website:

Genie Angels is a network of genealogy volunteers offering free genealogy help to other genealogy researchers who wish to obtain research materials from their local area for the cost of the materials.

Genie Angels has a growing list of volunteers to help you obtain copies of material in areas where they live. Some volunteer to do lookups in books they own, others will take cemetery photos, while others will do simple research for you in their local libraries. They may require you to pay cost of documents, copying, postage, etc. Fees should be worked out with each volunteer.

When requesting help please remember to put "Genie Angels" in the subject of your message.

Angels fill our heart with gratitude! Volunteer today and promote the ripple effect of helping others. (Information from GenealogyBlog)

THE SWEETEST OF NIGHT AND THE FINEST OF DAYS

I wish you, I wish you,
I wish you these wishes
Cool drinks in your glasses
Warm food in your dishes
People to nourish, cherish, and love you
A lamp in the window to light your way home in a haze
I wish you the sweetest of nights and the finest of days
I wish you, I wish you
A talent for living
Delight in the getting
Delight in the giving
A song in your soul, and someone to hear it
Wisdom to find the right path when you're lost in a haze
I wish you the sweetest of nights and the finest of days
A snug roof above you, a strong self inside you
The courage to go where you know you must go
A good heart to guide you
And good friends beside you
I wish you, I wish you
A dream worth the doing
And fortune's face smiling
On all your pursuing
And pleasures that far, far,
Outweigh your small sorrows
Arms wide to embrace your tomorrows
A long sunlit sail on the bluest
And smoothest of bays
I wish you the sweetest of nights

And the finest of days

From Judith Viorst's Collection of Poems