



January/February 2026

Volume 31 Issue 1

MISSION: Our mission is to stimulate an interest in studying family history and genealogy, and assist persons who are researching their family history. Whether a person begins their search with documents and a name, or through a DNA test, searching for family members is what we do.

VISITORS WELCOME!

What will you do this year that will improve your skills or grow your family tree? How will you celebrate America's 250th birthday this year in light of your Ancestry? How will you engage in the dialog this year?



Join us for:

- ❖ **Discussion Group** – First Tuesday of the month from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, In-Person at the Roseville Main Library Conference Room (225 Taylor Street) and also using ZOOM – Genealogy questions welcome, plus sharing of genealogy ideas. (September-November)
- ❖ **General Meeting with Speaker** – Second Tuesday of the month from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. In-Person and Zoom at the Maidu Community Center (1550 Maidu Drive in Roseville) and an occasional evening Zoom meeting. A brief general meeting will be followed by a presentation on genealogy research topics. (September-November)



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Roseville Genealogical Society Newsletter

Contact us by e-mail: rgsca3@gmail.com



RGS Meeting Calendar - Upcoming RGS Speakers and Workshops
C=Class D=Discussion IP=In Person S=Speaker Z=Zoom
Email RGS at rgsca3@gmail.com for Zoom access information.

2025	Format		Date	Topic
RGS	D	IP & Z	Jan 6	Open Discussion
RGS	S	IP & Z	Jan 13	"Documenting Your Treasures" -Glenda Lloyd
RGS	D	IP & Z	Feb 3	How Do You Keep & Record Your Heirlooms
RGS	S	IP	Feb 10	"Show and Tell" program with RGS

ONGOING RGS ACTIVITIES

Ask A Genealogist at the Library – Come by to talk or ask questions. Or schedule an appointment for a one-hour session at another time. Saturday dates will return in the summer.	BOOK-A-GENEALOGIST Schedule a FREE one-hour appointment with a genealogist. Send an email to rgsca3@gmail.com with the subject line: Book-A-Genealogist.
LENDING LIBRARY (MEMBERS ONLY) Send an email to rgsca3@gmail.com with the subject line: Lending Library.	
<u>Martha Riley Library Dates</u>	
• January 14 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • January 21 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • January 28 – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	• Feb. 4 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • Feb. 11 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • Feb. 18 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • Feb. 25 – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. All dates are tentative in February
<u>Maidu Library Dates</u>	
• January 15 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • January 22 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • January 29 – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	• Feb. 5 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • Feb.12 – 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. • Feb. 19 – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. • Feb. 26 – 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. All dates are tentative in February



A Fresh Evaluation of Your Family

By Carolyn Lewis

Double checking your tree is often a good thing to do when you have been researching and documenting a tree for years. You never know what new relatives have become genealogists and created their own trees. You will have to defend your facts or update them based on new evidence. Check who reported information on the records you find and determine if something else was reported earlier by someone else closer to the actual event. Check the birth and death dates were entered correctly. Check the mother's age at the time the first or last child was born. Check if other people with the same name were born in that area. Were they from a different generation or cousin line of that family? Have you checked that your repeated names are each unique to a specific date and place of their own? Do a careful comparison by checking addresses, parents' names, or house numbers.

Local newspaper articles about events should be compared to vital records or other comparable records for that year. Check out each child born to the couple. Make sure the mother consistently has the same surname and there is not a second marriage. Was the last known residence before coming to America different from their birth place? Research in that last known residential town or county to find more people or added information.

Use Full Search text on people you have already researched long ago because new documents can become known. And last but not least, add sources to facts that you might have long ago entered without a source. Sometimes names can be added to a tree due to being on another family member's record. Then those new names need more sources of their own information. Would now be a suitable time to do DNA testing to add a new source to your ancestor?

Consider asking a parent, aunt or uncle who are older to participate in DNA testing because they are one generation closer to the past than you. Some people feel inclined to delete an old tree, but it might be better to make it private or print it out so that you can go back to double check things.



America's 250th Birthday! 1776-2026



This year the United States Celebrates its 250th Birthday! Several Genealogical Societies are prepared to celebrate this year. The above banner was a free graphic from the National Genealogical Society (NGS).

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has a series of prepared articles and videos labelled "American 250," that can be seen on their website at <https://www.dar.org/outreach/america-250>

Family Tree magazine has an article outlining the "Revolutionary War Timeline: Celebrate the United States' 250th Anniversary." <https://familytreemagazine.com/history/revolutionary-war-timeline/>

The Library of Congress has a blog article "Our Invitation to You: Celebrate America's 250th Anniversary." <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2023/07/our-invitation-to-you-celebrate-americas-250th-anniversary/>

From the National Archives, "All Americans Invited to Join the Journey to America 250 and Celebrate 250 Years of the Declaration of Independence." <https://www.archives.gov/news/articles/declaration250-campaign-launch>

And finally, American Heritage says, "For America's 250th Birthday, Let's Think Local." <https://www.americanheritage.com/americas-250th-birthday-lets-think-local>



La Befana: Italy's Beloved Christmas Witch



In the rich history of Italian folklore, few figures are as beloved and enduring as La Befana, the kindly old witch who visits children on the night of January 5th. Unlike Santa Claus, La Befana is depicted as an old witch-like woman flying on a broomstick, wearing a shawl, and covered in soot from climbing down chimneys. Her arrival marks the eve of Epiphany, a Christian holiday commemorating the visit of the Magi to the Christ child. La Befana's story is far older and more complex than a simple tale of gift-giving. It is a blend of pagan ritual, medieval legend, and regional celebration that continues to

captivate generations.

The legend of La Befana may trace back to Roman midwinter festivals honoring female deities such as Strenia, associated with health, fertility, and the new year. During these celebrations, Romans exchanged gifts and decorated their homes, customs that are still observed in today's Epiphany traditions. Over time, these pagan roots intertwined with Christian lore. According to one popular tale:

The Three Wise Men, on their way to see the baby Jesus, stopped at La Befana's house to ask for directions. She offered them shelter but declined their invitation to join the journey. Later, regretting her decision, she set out to find the Christ child, bringing gifts for him. Unable to find him, she continues her search each year, leaving presents for good children and coal (or dark candy) for the naughty ones.

Today, La Befana is celebrated throughout Italy, particularly in central regions such as Lazio, Tuscany, and Umbria. Traditions vary by town, but common customs include:

- Children hanging stockings by the fireplace or window sills.
- Parades and street performances featuring La Befana flying in on her broomstick.
- Markets selling toys, candies, and "carbone dolce," a sweet black candy that mimics coal.
- Community bonfires and Epiphany feasts that bring families together.

In urban centers like Rome, the Piazza Navona transforms into a festive scene, with vendors, puppet shows and costumed La Befana delighting crowds.

La Befana remains a treasured part of Italian heritage, especially among families who pass down her tale with affection and pride. Whether you are exploring your roots or sharing her story with a new generation, she offers a magical link to Italy's past and a reminder that even a broomstick can carry the spirit of the season. -by JRS



What is the RGS Show & Tell Event?

Remember back in elementary school when the teacher asked you to bring something to school to share with the class. That is what we do with genealogical items.

Search your closets, attic, and basement for a *genealogical object*. Sharing a “family object” that belonged to one of your ancestors is a way to add a story about one of your ancestors.

What to bring:

- ✚ Item may be large or small, something you can carry, or if it is too large, bring a picture of it. Examples include: quilt or blanket, book, cookbook or recipe, sample of cattle brand, photograph of dishes, event, shadow box with collected items, a uniform or piece of clothing worn or made, or a certificate, etc.

What you do:

- ✚ Explain what the article is, who it belonged to, and why it is important in your family. Talk for no longer than 2-4 minutes.

Event:

- ✚ Viewers may ask questions. If you do not want an item touched, please bring a card sign to state that information.

Come and learn more about ancestors than just facts and figures!

Genealogy Hint

You may have searched for ancestors on Ancestry or FamilySearch or another website and not found much. Records continue to be added to websites so do not forget to go back and search again several months later. I just found “new” evidence on Ancestry when they *added new collections* to their website. One entitled “U.S. Family History Books” provided books containing multiple family genealogies, a couple of which are related to my family, written in 1911 and earlier. Contributed by Mary J. Sayles



Member Spotlight

By Linda Reiner Vose



This month's spotlight is on Carolyn Lewis, our newsletter editor. Carolyn grew up in San Jose, California. She was born deaf. As a child, she mostly played outdoors or stayed inside reading books. Before the advent of closed captioning, she preferred books. Originally she and her parents participated together in a program for deaf toddlers aged twelve months to three years for early speech development. This was called "Project Idea" at the early San Jose Valley Med School complex. She took speech therapy for 17 years from early childhood until high school graduation. In addition, she had individual tutoring.

In 1977, she was in a television commercial with Peggy Fleming to promote Peninsula Oral School for the Deaf in Redwood City, CA (now re-located in Belmont, CA as Jean Weingarten Peninsula Oral School for the Deaf). As an adult she learned American Sign Language and now has two languages. She also had a left ear cochlear implant which replaced her hearing aids in 2006.

Carolyn earned her BA in Biology from University of California, Santa Cruz, 1991, and worked for Smith Kline Diagnostics in San Jose for 7 months. Then she worked for HOPE Services helping adults with developmental disabilities in both a day program and in work contracts they had from 1993-2001. She also had evening clients with disabilities through another agency two nights a week.

She and her husband Dan, who she met through her church, have 3 young adult daughters. In 2001 she became a stay-at-home mom. Dan's work went out of business during 2002 dot.com bust and they stayed with her mom in El Dorado Hills until they bought their house in Roseville in 2003. She joined RGS in early 2022.

Carolyn began her genealogical journey when she received a direct lineage chart from her maternal grandfather printed from an old IBM computer. She grew up with lots of pictures, stories, and documents that family gave her, and she personally knew her four grandparents and two great grandmothers.

Carolyn earned an AAS degree in Family History Research from Brigham Young University- Idaho (via Pathway) in June/July of 2025.

Carolyn is researching ancestors from United States, Austria, Czechia (Both Bohemia and Moravia), Denmark, Germany, and Luxembourg. The only European line she has not touched is her Dad's Irish line. Her focus these days is research on Czechia records.



Carolyn uses FamilySearch, Ancestry, My Heritage, and Roots Magic. She did DNA tests for both her parents. She also uses Facebook Genealogy pages, Newspapers, Google, Wisconsin Historical Society website, and the Czech archives.

Her mom has a line that goes back to 1132 in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Her Dad has a line that goes back to 1655 in Westphalia.

"Other relatives researched the distant portions of those lines. I was the person who built out at least six generations of my family tree from the start. There are only three major brick walls that I have in my family tree relating to branching out into Europe: Providence Rhode Island to Ireland, San Francisco to Osterholz-Scharmbeck, Lower Saxony. And one Prussian line completely unknown at this time. While others have joined my family history effort after I began, I am currently the only one working my newly discovered matrilineal Czech lines."

"I am on the trail of current records that I know are my family further back in time. I am back to 1763 right now with strong clues back to 1637 that I have to take my time to verify and research in original documents. The clues came from My Heritage in December 2025. If they pan out, I am positive I will have some collaborators on that line in the near future."

Many women in recent generations were teachers. Ancestors of later generations were farmers, millers, dressmakers, tailors, shoemakers and glovemakers. Some worked in carpentry, logging, and trains in Northern CA. One was a typographer and had a printing business in early Wisconsin. Another owned a store in early Wisconsin.

"I have some China dishes, and some small glasses. I also have some old opera glasses from my great grandmother and an old mechanical pencil base that belonged to my great grandfather." she added when asked about heirlooms.

For beginners, Carolyn strongly encourages them to talk to all living family members and get their memories, pictures, facts, and DNA (with permission) in order to establish a solid foundation for their family tree by using charts and diagrams.

"I really believe that the journey of a thousand miles, or in this case, a thousand names begins with one person and one record at a time. It is a daily practice for me. I believe in volunteering and helping. Blessings come to my own research when I help others along."



RGS Membership Renewals

As we begin the new year, the Roseville Genealogical Society invites you to renew your membership for 2026 and continue your engagement in the meaningful pursuit of genealogical research and education.

We are pleased to announce that membership dues will remain unchanged:

- Individual Membership: \$30
- Family Membership: \$35

A membership form is attached for your convenience.

Your continued participation supports our mission to foster community, share knowledge, and promote the study of family history. We also encourage you to extend this invitation to friends and colleagues who may be interested in joining our Society. -by JRS.

The Roseville Genealogical Society Newsletter
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Visit us on the web at: <https://srgcouncil.org/cpage.php?pt=24> or at

<https://www.facebook.com/RosevilleGenealogicalSociety/>

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