



## Future Programs

### Sonoma County Genealogical Society's Monthly Meeting and Program

"Dr. Stephen Morse is known as the DNA Guy in Genealogy Circles. Come and learn how DNA testing can enhance any genealogy research."

Date: Saturday, October 15th  
 Show and Tell: 12:30 p.m.  
 Meeting/Program begins at 1:00 p.m.  
**Featuring: Dr. Stephen P. Morse**  
**Topic: DNA and Genealogy**  
 Location: The Finley Community Center  
 2060 West College Avenue  
 Santa Rosa, CA 95401

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### *Prostitution in the Wild West, by Cindy Brennan*



There were dozens and dozens of excellent sessions at the Southern California Genealogical Society's Annual Conference, but the title of this one drew hoards of curious attendees to see what it was all about! The session was taught by a *primly* dressed, 60-something woman, from Ohio. She had developed an interest in this topic when she discovered that her great Aunt had been a "Madame" in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Prostitution, no matter what our moral views, holds an interesting, if not precarious, place in history. As the western part of our country was being explored and settled in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, prostitution followed the migration to these new lands. When men fled across the US in search of gold, the working girls were not far behind. Although the country was influenced by the strict Victorian views of the time, prostitution flourished. It is believed that prostitutes made up close to twenty percent of the female population of California in 1850. Many terms such as harlot, lady of the night, or sporting girl, were used to identify the women in the census.

While a common perception was that women were "abducted" into prostitution, there were several reasons why a person may have actually ended up there. Economics played a likely role in some situations. During the late 1800's when a typical weekly wage averaged \$8 to \$9, a prostitute could earn \$40 to \$175 per week. Prostitution spanned all types of races and ethnicities, and they were often married. In this 1880 Michigan Census below, you have a painter whose wife is a prostitute, living with a visitor and servant who are also in this profession. Note that they live next door to the ex-Constable!

Smith, G. D.	W M 29	Boarder	1	Sagehen House	
Gasada Thomas	W M 23	Boarder	1	Prostitute	
— Mary	W F 22	Wife	1	Prostitute	
Manley Ann	W F 17	Servant	1	Prostitute	
Kelly George	W M 18	Visitor	1	Prostitute	
Back James	W M 59		1	Ex Constable	
— Mary Ann	W F 35	Wife	1	Keeping house	

As is true in most "professions", prostitution had its own hierarchy. Girls, who were just starting out, would attempt to work their way up to the top rung. Then, the older they got, they would drop down the ladder again. The average age for prostitution back then was from 17 to 25. The "Madame", who ran the business, was an older woman who was

no longer *desirable*. She had generally worked her way up to the top, and then decided to run the business. Because it was difficult for women to own businesses and conduct legal transactions, she usually had a man around the house that tended to these affairs.

The most desirable role for women in this profession to attain was working at a Parlor House. These were gen-

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## SCGS Meeting Dates

### Sonoma County Genealogical Society's Upcoming Meetings and Programs

- October 15, 2011
- November 19, 2011
- January 21, 2012
- February 18, 2012

All meetings, unless otherwise specified, are held on Saturdays at the Finley Center in Santa Rosa. **Regular monthly programs and meetings are free!**

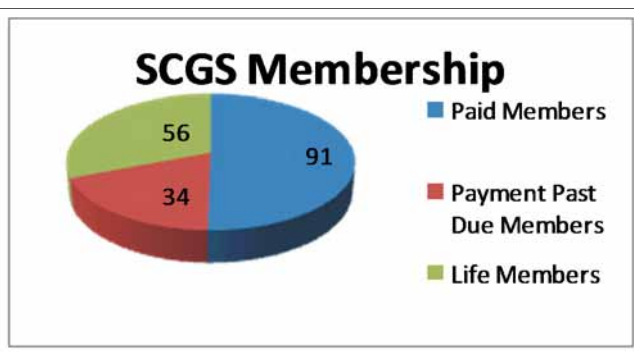
## Family Search Update

TIPS for using Family Search website (familysearch.org)

Clicking on the logo (top left corner of screen) will take you back to the Startup Page (Home Page). This may not work yet on some of the screens at present, but it is being worked on to make it happen on all screens.

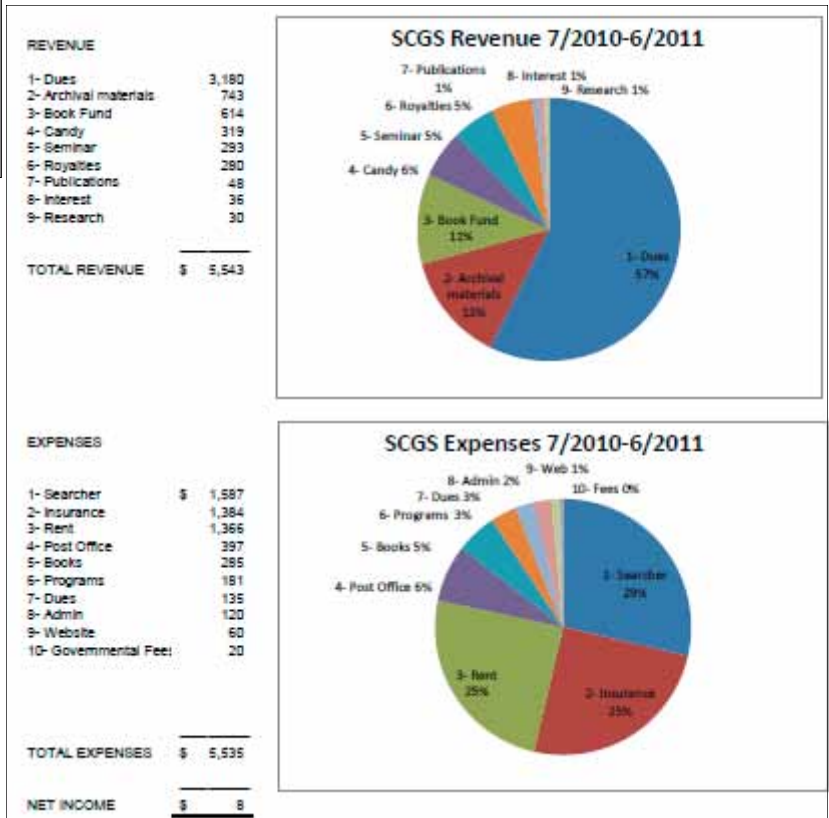
This, also, works in Google and is being implemented almost universally on many websites.

## Membership and Financial Status



On the left is a graph of our membership breakdown. We have a total of 181 members at this time.

On the right, we have a synopsis of our finances. We had an overall net income of \$8.00 for last year.



## New Members

Welcome to our new members:

1. Michael Mullins—who is researching Mullins, Bramlett, Alverson and Hargrave.
2. Henry Katz—who is researching Katz, Isaacs, Caplan and Bernhardt
3. Colleen Paggie

If you have any items of interest or historical photos that you would like to submit to the monthly newsletter, please e-mail Cindy Brennan at: [newsletter@scgs.org](mailto:newsletter@scgs.org)  
Items must be received by the 25th of the month to be included in the following month.

## Sonoma County Historical Society



Even the small boulders weighed 3 tons and had to be handled carefully.

After two years of planning and waiting, the Chanate Historic Cemetery's 'monument to the dead' was installed in September. The monument consists of three huge boulders (the largest weighs over five tons) holding four cast bronze plaques with the names of those buried in the old county cemetery. A total of 1,328 names are commemorated on the plaques, providing recognition for

the mostly unidentified graves. A memorial service of dedication will be scheduled for Spring 2012.



The completed installation was taped off and the concrete left to harden. The plaques will be placed in the boulders later.

## The Wild, Wild West Continued

51	170	A Jung Yoi	C 72 45					Cigar maker
		Lung Lum	C 72 30	boarder	1			Cigar maker
52	171	Ming Luch	C 72 45					House keeper
		Zhai Ho	C 7 30	wife	1			prostitute
		Yin Hai	C 7 12	daughter	1			prostitute
		Jun Hong	C 7 27	boarder	1			prostitute
		Chau Hal	C 7 23	boarder	1			prostitute
		Sun Yau	C 7 20	boarder	1			prostitute

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San Francisco became a particularly concentrated area for prostitution, particularly within some of the Chinese communities. An infamous prostitute named Ah Toy, was responsible for bringing hundreds of pre-teen girls into San Francisco and then imprisoning them into prostitution. Due to



their circumstances, they often lived only 2-3 years if they were kept in these surroundings. Listed above in the 1880 San Francisco census is a 12-year old prostitute, living with her mother, father, and a host of other prostitutes.

Fortunately, a woman missionary named Donaldina Cameron made it her work to help many of these young girls escape their circumstances. She was responsible for rescuing and educating more than 3000 girls who had been enslaved into prostitution. The other factor in helping to end a lot of prostitution in San Francisco was the 1906 earthquake that destroyed many homes and buildings.

53	172	Elizabeth A. ...	...	...	...	...	...	...
54	173	Fannie Porter	...	...	...	...	...	Boarding house
55	174	William ...	...	...	...	...	...	...
56	175	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
57	176	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
58	177	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
59	178	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
60	179	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
61	180	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
62	181	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
63	182	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
64	183	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

To this day, people continue to be fascinated by the more famous of these ladies. A few who come to mind are; Julia Bulette of Virginia City,

Jennie Rogers of Denver and Fanny Porter from San Antonio. Fannie ran a brothel that was frequented by outlaws, such as Butch Cassidy, the Sundance Kid, and other members of the Wild Bunch. She is depicted as owning a boarding house in the 1900 census above.

As always, there is something interesting to be gained through genealogic research. Although this topic is a part of the *times gone by* in our country, don't expect it to appear in our History Books any-time soon!

**Note from the September Newsletter:** The source of the tombstone pictured on page 3 of the newsletter in September, was Thomas Lang. Find a grave memorial #5190197.

THE SONOMA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WHICH ENCOURAGES INTEREST IN GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY