

Serving family history of the Livermore, Pleasanton and
southeastern portion of Alameda County, in the beautiful San
Francisco Bay Area of California



Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society P.O. Box 901, Livermore, California 94551

Web: <http://www.L-AGS.org>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/Livermore.Amador.Genealogical.Society/>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1142643925760388/>

June 2026

General Meeting: Focused Research: Using Research Plans

With: Lisa S. Gorrell

Date: Monday, June 8, 2026 7:00 p.m. (Zoom chat starts at 6:30 p.m.)

Location: via Zoom- Preregister via ZOOM below:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/t_POa5aQ2-hl2p5z2r1dQ

Chair: Program Chair, <mailto:program@L-AGS.org>

Cost: No Charge - Visitors welcome

Details: Please see page 2

Other Special Interest Groups and Meetings

Fourth Friday Finds

Topic: *General Genealogy*

Join virtually to delve into your Canadian ancestor's stories, finds, and resources.

Date: Friday, June 26, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Virtual via Zoom. Email Chair for Zoom invite.

Chair: Debbie Mascot,

<mailto:bulletin.manager@L-AGS.org>

Library Docents

Join L-AGS genealogy experts to begin your genealogy venture. Docents will be at the Livermore Civic Center Library on the first Wednesday of each month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Board Meeting

Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2026
at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Contact Chair for the Link

Chair: Program Chair,

<mailto:program@L-AGS.org>



July Potluck

Save the date! Saturday, July 25, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., we will all meet in Livermore for a potluck picnic. Details to come, but SAVE THE DATE.

With: Lisa S. Gorrell



Date: Monday, June 8, 2026,
7:00 p.m. (Zoom starts at 6:30
p.m.)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/registration/tZYsduiorjgsG9HuhQRKgpR5Nh3fb9Y91tW>

Cost: No Charge - Visitors welcome

Topics of Future General Meetings

<i>Month</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
July 2026	POTLUCK PICNIC IN LIEU OF MEETING	NA
August 2026	Alienation of Affection- Divorce in the USA	Christine Cohen
September 2026	Transcription and Abstraction of Original Records	Roger Prince
October 2026	The Salem Witch Trials	Madeline Yanov

The Drop-in Genealogy Program at the Livermore Civic Center Library has been going strong since February. It occurs on the first Wednesday of each month, from 10:30 – 12:30 for drop-ins, 10:00 – 1:00 for volunteers. We can still use volunteers to help assist individuals with beginning their family search. Contact Tom Mathews for more information and to volunteer (tjmathews@sbcglobal.net).

Research Locations

Livermore California FamilySearch Center

Location: 950 Mocho Street, Livermore, California

Phone: (925) 443-2750

Web: <https://locations.familysearch.org/en/us/ca/livermore/950-mocho-st?qp=Livermore%2C+California%2C+United+States&lat=37.68202&lng=-121.76837&r=50>

Special Notes: The entrance is in the front of the building on the right—there is a sign on the door. If the parking in front of the building is full, there is a large parking lot in the rear of the building.

Pleasanton Genealogy Center

Location: 400 Old Bernal Avenue, Pleasanton, California

Email: docents.chair@L-AGS.org for appointment with docent

Special Notes: The Pleasanton Genealogy Center, jointly supported by L-AGS, the Friends of the Pleasanton Library, and the Pleasanton Public Library, contains the largest collection of genealogy books, CDs and online databases in the Tri-Valley. Access to Ancestry.com (Library-edition) and Heritage Quest (also available at home with your library card)

L-AGS Membership

Thank you to our Members, Benefactors and Patrons for the continued support of L-AGS.

Patrons *(Contribute \$100 above and beyond the Household Membership Level)*

Matthew Berry
Annette Breingan
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Sue and Greg Davis
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Julie Lui
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L-AGS Members 63 active memberships

WEDDING BELL BLUES

By Rick Frohling, rickfrohling@aol.com

Are you having trouble finding your ancestors' marriage records? Have you considered you may be looking in the wrong places, or on the wrong dates? There are many reasons that marriages did not take place where our ancestors lived, that the wedding date we know does not match the date of the actual wedding, or that marriage records simply don't exist.

Why Marriage Records May Not Exist

Throughout history, marriage has been a contract between families, a religious rite, and a civil ceremony sanctioned by the state. In some countries and at some times, it has been all three. Each may have fallen in or out of favor during the history of a specific country, and this can affect which records are available.

Common-law marriages do not require documentation, and have been the norm at times in many places. Marriage records have been lost due to fire, floods, or age, and there have been times they were not considered necessary, and so were never created.

Massachusetts first required marriage licenses in 1639, but it was not until 1929 that all states had laws requiring them.

Why Dates May Not Match

The timeline for marriage records includes obtaining the marriage license, a possible waiting period, the actual marriage, and the recording of the marriage. There may be delays between these steps, and they may not be recorded in the order they occurred. You may need to check a considerable range of time before and after the event.

Family members may "adjust" the dates of marriages to keep family secrets hidden. If a child is born less than nine months before a wedding, the marriage may be backdated to the previous year. If you can't find a marriage record, try looking one year before the reported date. Chances are good that the marriage month and day may be accurate, even if the year isn't.

A couple may marry when the child from a previous marriage, or just a previous union, is very young. In these cases, the new husband may adopt the child, and the family may conspire to keep the fact of the adoption from the child. This is another reason the marriage date may be changed.

Marriages may occur before divorces are final, or the couple may live as married before the couple makes the union official.

Why Ancestors Didn't Marry Near Home

Today, destination weddings are fairly common. However, in the past, couples may have had very different reasons for moving the marriage away from their hometown.

Even if the wedding was private, the issuance of a marriage license is a matter of public record, and was routinely published in local papers. Keeping this record out of the sight of local family and neighbors may be one reason for moving a marriage.

Marriages may have moved to other jurisdictions due to a number of other reasons. Some states require blood tests and waiting periods between the issuance of the license and the actual marriage. Others prohibit the marriage of first cousins or vary in their determination of the age of consent. During periods of war or military drafts, a couple may cross state lines to avoid these delays before the young recruit left for basic training.

Until the 1967 Supreme Court decision in *Loving vs. the State of Virginia*, so-called anti-miscegenation laws prohibited interracial marriage, and such marriages could be legal in one state, but not recognized at all in another. A similar situation occurred between 2004, when the first legal same-sex marriage occurred in Massachusetts, and 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled all states must issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and recognize such marriages performed in other jurisdictions.

There are also less controversial reasons for moving a marriage from a hometown. The couple may simply decide to elope, marry while away at college, or live in one place, and decide to hold the wedding in the hometown of the other spouse's family.

Gretna Green and Marriage Mills

The 1754 Marriage Act prohibited the marriage of couples under 21 without their parents' consent in England and Wales. Scotland had no such restrictions, and the village of Gretna Green, just north of English border, became a destination for couples who wanted to circumvent the English law. The first stop was a local blacksmith shop where marriages could be performed, and such marriages became known as "blacksmith marriages" or "anvil marriages."

In the U.S., some states or localities enacted "gin laws" that mandated three-day waiting periods before marriage, in order to prevent drunken acts of marriages by those who might be too impaired, and might regret their actions once they sobered up.

In bordering states or counties, "marriage mills" sprang up, and soon came to be known as "Gretna Greens" after the Scottish village where this phenomenon began.

The R. H. Lutes Wedding Chapel in Yuma, Arizona was a famous destination for movie stars to marry and avoid the spotlight. This article in *Phoenix* magazine gives an interesting insight into one of these modern-day Gretna Greens: <https://www.phoenixmag.com/2020/01/23/the-best-little-hitchin-post-in-arizona/>

Strategies for Finding Marriage Records

Look for both church and civil records and find out when marriage records were required in the jurisdiction you believe the marriage occurred in. Look for records at least one year before the stated marriage date, and two years before the birth of the first child.

Studying the laws of the state or country at the time of the marriage may prove helpful. Find out what marriage restrictions were in effect at the time and place of the marriage.

Look for clues in the information you have to determine a likely date range for the marriage record: date of birth for firstborn children, prior marriages, possible marriage of relatives, wartime.

FamilySearch has an excellent article about "Gretna Greens" in the United States that includes a table that lists locations your ancestor might be from and suggests the most likely corresponding "Gretna Green" at:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Gretna_Greens_in_the_United_States

Tread Lightly

Relatives may not share your excitement when you break through this particular brick wall. If a date has been adjusted, the family may have a lot invested in hiding the truth you are so eager to share. Try to ascertain how your news might be received before you loudly proclaim your find from the rooftops.