Historical Societies:

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Riverside County, CA

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Bridges between People & History

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SO, YOU’VE LOOKED AT CENSUS RECORDS, TRIED TO FIND VITAL RECORDS, LOOKED AT CITY DIRECTORIES . . .

YOU KNOW WHERE THEY LIVED, BUT WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR LIVES: THE VILLAGE, COUNTY, STATE, AND MAYBE COUNTRY WHERE THEY LIVED. WHAT ARE THE BUSINESSES IN THE COMMUNITY? WHO FOUNDED THE REGION? WHAT TYPE OF TERRAIN, WEATHER, AND ECONOMY COULD BE FOUND THERE? WHERE DO YOU GO FOR THAT INFO?

**HISTORICAL SOCIETIES! THE BRIDGES BETWEEN US AND OUR ANCESTORS.**

I. VARIOUS “NAMES” FOR THESE ORGANIZATIONS

A. Historical Society

B. Preservation Society

C. Regional Society

D. Heritage Society

E. Genealogical Society (may or may not be connected to the local genealogy club)

II. WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED ON-SITE

A. Libraries

B. Museums

C. Universities/colleges

C. Their own venues (often old houses, schools, train depots, etc.)

III. HOW TO FIND THEM ON LINE

A. Google (or use preferred search engine): “Historical Society” and the location

B. Check “Society Hill”: http://www.daddezio.com/society/index.html

C. Epodunk.com

1. Select by state

a. “Community Profiles” – cities, towns, villages

b. “County Profiles”

2. Select “Historical Societies” from menu on left under “Quick Links”

D. Linkpendium.com

1. Select the location desired

2. Select sub-location of ancestors

3. Scroll down to “Societies”

E. Check on CyndisList.com

F. Check state/county websites (e.g., USGenWeb.com)

NOTE: The historical society may not be advertised. On-site, ask at the local library, Post Office, or Chamber of Commerce. On-line, be creative in your searches and check all the different options suggested above.

IV. DIFFERENT TYPES OF “SOCIETES”

1. By event; for example:
2. Civil War
3. Local disaster
4. Local business
5. By culture in the region; for example:
6. German community
7. Jewish culture

C. By village, town, or city

D. By county or region (encompassing many counties or parts of counties); for example:

1. Mohawk Valley (NY)

2. Great Lakes (Midwest)

E. By state

F. By country (there are similar societies in other countries, see some of references above)

V. TYPES OF ITEMS SOMETIMES FOUND IN THEIR COLLECTIONS

A. Artifacts

1. Tools

2. Furniture

3. Musical instruments

4. Other items owned by those of the region or culture or used in a local event

B. Land information

1. Deeds

2. Maps

3. Gazetteers

C. Documents of residents, businesses, churches, etc.

1. Vital records

2. Legal materials (e.g., probate files, court cases, etc.)

3. Minutes of meetings

D. Newspapers and clippings including:

1. Birth, marriage, and death announcements

2. Advertising

3. Social events

E. Photographs

1. Of residents

2. Of locations (churches, schools, businesses, etc.)

3. The locale “then and now”

F. Personal papers

1. Diaries and journals

2. Letters

3. Biographies

G. Books on the region, people, culture, events, etc. (some written by locals)

H. Historians who know information about those elements

*Summary/Hints:*

If visiting in person:

1. Make appointments & arrange to visit with the local “expert.”

2. Follow the “rules” of the location – ask about the specifics on having copies

made, using a scanner or digital camera, costs, etc.

3. Clean up after yourself if using the materials of the society.

4. Above all: be courteous! Engage in conversation (ask about the history of the

area, mention what you know of your ancestor’s connection to the area or

culture, talk about the pioneers of the area . . . if you become an interested “friend,”

personnel may warm up to your cause).

5. Make a donation.

6. Offer to share your materials and findings with the organization.

If using the on-line services:

1. Be sure to read all the directions on the website before contacting the staff.
2. Do not expect the personnel to do the research for you.
3. Be specific about the information you seek.
4. Get information on donating and/or joining the society.
5. Offer to send your compiled information to be posted on their website and then follow-through.

NOTE: Sometimes societies will make free or discounted copies for their members in distant locations.

Using the services of the historical society where your ancestor lived can help bring you closer to your forebears. It can truly be a bridge connecting you to that life that existed long before you were ever thought of.



Using the



*Suggested Search Option for more information:*

**Historical**

**Society**

Sign on to FamilySearch.org



Click on “Search”

Click on “wiki”

Enter “historical societies” in topic search box

Result: a list of a number of different society pages will appear, providing additional information on their holdings, value, etc.

For more specific results, put in the name of the exact society you seek. Not all are listed, but those that are may include information on their hours of operation, location, telephone number, etc.