



**City of San Bernardino  
Historical and Pioneer Society  
P.O. Box 875, San Bernardino, CA 92402**

**LIBRARY NEWS APRIL 2009**

By Richard D. Thompson, Librarian

**HISTORICAL PROJECTS  
VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

Last spring San Bernardino archivist Genevieve Chavez encouraged me to apply for grants from the federal government for historical projects for the Historical and Pioneer Society. She copied sections from government entities on how to apply, but upon reading these it was apparent that there were problems. The instructions started off with words to the effect, “Have a meeting with all of your PhD’s and brainstorm a problem. Divide them into study groups and write up programs on how to fulfill a need in the field of history.” It was clear that all kinds of strings were going to be attached to any grants, plus the government wanted to have control of the process AND of the end product. In talking to the librarians and docents at the Feldheim, it was confirmed that working on the library’s grant projects was not a pleasant experience—that the government had many restrictions and caveats. The word “Lilliput” immediately came to mind.



Ultimately I decided not to go to the government for money. Our Society has been fairly free from government grants, with a couple of exceptions at the local level. We have been pretty much independent since the founding of the Pioneer Society in 1888, and there is some satisfaction in that. However, I had compiled a list of our historical projects in anticipation of the grant application, and

these are shown below. The projects are designed to provide a data base at the Heritage House Library. Some have not been started as yet, others are works in progress, and a couple have been completed. I have listed them all in order to bring you up to date on what we are doing at the library.

There already exists substantial information in our computer and we have been able to assist several researchers thus far. However, there is still much to be done. We need volunteers to help on the projects, and interested parties can choose one from the list on which they might like to work. Some projects are quite interesting and others are a bit tedious, but even on the boring ones you will learn something about our local history. If you want to help out, contact me, Richard Thompson, (760) 946-2669, email [rdthompson@uia.net](mailto:rdthompson@uia.net), or come in person to the Heritage House on Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

1. **Covered Wagon Families.** Transcribe onto disc a late-1930s newspaper series. This series includes brief individual stories on the original pioneer families and describes each of their trips to San Bernardino, plus has genealogies carried down to the date of publication, usually four or five generations. The series featured 58 families. This project is now complete.



**Printout of completed digital file prepared by Donna and Dave Rutherford**

As can be seen in the photograph above, this was quite a project. Readers of the Library News might remember the July 2007 issue when I ran just one of the stories, that of Danford and Elizabeth (Garner) Atwood and their children and descendants, down to the sixth generation. There are hundreds of names just in this one article. If you see Donna or Dave thank them effusively for this wonderful contribution to the history of San Bernardino. They teamed up to type the entire collection, and because it is typed, not scanned, each and every name, or word for that matter, is searchable. Copies on CD are now available for our members.

2. **1890 Project.** Most genealogists can tell you that a large portion of the 1890 Federal Census was destroyed by fire. This project seeks to establish, as much as possible, those persons living in San Bernardino in 1890. During that same year, one of the local newspapers wrote a couple of articles on the census, one of which stated that the census taker had listed 5,000 names for the city. The editor thought there were more, but that figure is what the official census enumerated, and this might prove helpful for anybody willing to take on this rather large project. The goal would be to find 5,000 people living within the city limits in 1890.
  
3. **Scan the Famous File.** This is the title researchers (and Arda herself) used for historian Arda Haenszel's collection of news and magazine clippings. This is what newspapers call a "morgue." I began scanning the biographical portion of the file late last summer and continued through the fall. It was done one page at a time and was quite time consuming. When we obtained our new scanner, which not only scans at a fast clip (six pages per minute) but also reads each page and puts it into a searchable file, I changed over. Biographies from A through J have been scanned the old-fashioned way, and each scan is titled with the name of the individual. Letters K and L have been scanned with the new scanner and each scan has been titled. I estimate the rest of the scanning project can be done in about 25 hours. The files then need to be titled, which can be done at home by anybody with a computer...any kind of computer. We simply put each file on a CD and you can take it home and title the individuals at your leisure. There are probably 25 or 30 hours of work on this part of the project.
  
4. **Historic Houses Research.** This project will provide historical information on houses in the city. The key document to acquire is the title report, which provides a history of land ownership. We try to obtain this from the current property owner. There are a variety of other sources to determine when the structure was built and other pertinent historical data. I offered classes on property research at the Heritage House, but not many showed up. The attendees expressed an interest, but the only one who rolled up her sleeves and dug into all the available resources was Carolyn Covey, who did a very impressive job. I also joined in and did a report on our Heritage House, originally the Otis house. This project awaits those who have some energy, and a bit of the detective in them.
  
5. **Pioneer Cemetery Records.** List all known burials in Pioneer Cemetery. Begin with digitizing the Sexton's records which were published in the San Bernardino Genealogical Society newsletter.
  
6. **Chinese in Newspapers Index.** In the 1970s I compiled a list of newspaper articles having to do with Chinese, the emphasis being on San Bernardino. I printed many of these articles from microfilm reels. In the following decade Harry Lawton did a similar work focusing mostly on Riverside, and I have combined our efforts into three large ring binders. I had made an index of my articles, but Harry did not. Plus, he only listed the headline of the article on his copies, and often it is not possible to tell what the story is about from the headline (some just say "Local News," for example). Separate from that is the problem of fading. In the 1970s the city library had a microfilm copier that used chemicals to develop the printed copies. These weren't very good to begin with and have faded even more in the intervening decades. What is needed is for someone to continue the index and, if they are feeling particularly energetic, to recopy some of the faded prints (not many of these, fortunately). Also, if the volunteer is artistic, maybe he or she could print spine titles and put some Chinese art on the covers of the binders to jazz them up a bit.



A collection of about 750 news articles on local Chinese, 1867-1900

7. **San Bernardino Weddings.** Mary Lewis copied, from the Recorder's Office books, information on 19th Century marriages and printed the data in the Genealogical Society newsletter. These are in chronological order, and they need to be alphabetized. I have already done a goodly amount of work on this project.
8. **Pioneer Society Members Roll.** The Pioneer Society has a book that new members signed upon joining, and which was used from 1888 to 1927. The information needs to be digitized, both chronologically (as they joined) and alphabetically. The project is completed up to 1918. Maybe five hours of work remain.
9. **Diary/Journal Duplication.** Several citizens of San Bernardino kept diaries and journals, some of which have been published and some of which have not. These are in various repositories, but often just a single copy exists, and they sometimes go missing. This project would copy as many diaries and journals as possible in order to have a duplicate of each as a backup.
10. **Photo Index.** Old photographs of San Bernardino are sometimes hard to find. Often the only extant photo is one appearing in an early publication. There were a number of these in the late 19th Century and early 20th. This project, which is well along, indexes in which publication a particular picture appears.

11. **Buie “They Tell Me” Index.** Earl Buie wrote a column for the San Bernardino *Sun* for many years. His column contained all kinds of historical tidbits. He had a wonderful memory, and wrote very short stories (often only a line or two in an article of reminiscences) about some historical subject. The Historical and Pioneer Society has seven scrapbooks of his articles, and these need to be indexed. A *Best of Buie* booklet was published by the newspaper at one time, and this already has been indexed by Sue Payne (California Room docent at the Feldheim Library). Two of the eight volumes have been indexed. Remaining work: about 20 hours.
12. **Book Indexes.** Some historical books have either no index, or an inadequate one. A few books have already been indexed. Mary Lewis, for example, indexed Ingersoll’s *Century Annals of San Bernardino*. I have indexed Pauliena La Fuze’s *Saga of the San Bernardinos*, John Swisher’s *Bits ‘n Pieces* and *Mojave Rendezvous*, and Julian and Virginia Gobar’s *Raising the Dust* and *Range One East*.
13. **Web Site.** The Society needs help in creating a web site in which the fruits of our projects can be displayed. We need a web master to help us move into the 21st Century.
14. **Native Sons “Arrowgrams” Index.** This project is to index the newsletters of NSGW Arrowhead Parlor No. 110. Those available run from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s. Information on members includes place and date of birth, parents, death, burial, etc. There is genealogical information on hundreds of San Bernardino residents and their families. This project is well underway, as the 1970s and ‘80s have already been indexed.
15. **Donaldson Report.** This 1990s report on historic buildings in San Bernardino has 227 pages of photographs, each page consisting of numerous 35 mm negatives. Many of the buildings have been destroyed, but most still remain. What is needed is for somebody (or somebodies) to scan the negatives into a digital file.
16. **Barrett Stories Index.** Lew Barrett was a *Sun-Telegram* columnist with a specialty in religion. In 1954 and ‘55 the paper ran a series of his articles about the churches (also temples and the Jewish synagogue) of San Bernardino. At one time I had a complete run of these stories, but I either lent it to somebody or gave it away—in either case, I don’t have it any more. What we need is somebody willing to sit down at the microfilm reader/printer and index the titles of the articles and the date of publication so that we can find them in the newspaper. I haven’t seen my file for many, many years, but I suspect that there were 40 or 50 or more of these stories. Indexing could probably be done in about two sittings. Copying some of the stories would be nice, too, but not totally necessary.
17. **Chino Record Book, 1849-1856.** This is an alphabetized list of those immigrants who signed the register at Isaac Williams’ Rancho Santa Ana del Chino. It is compiled from a list transcribed and edited by Linda Bynum that appeared in the Historical Society of Southern California’s 1934 publication, and in Edwin Rhodes’ book, *The Break of Day in Chino*. I downloaded the information from the Internet, and it was all jumbled up. This project is 90-percent complete and needs perhaps about two hours of work to finish putting it in alphabetical order.



**18. Photographers.** The Society has a number of photographs of unidentified persons, and of persons identified but about whom nothing is known. Oftentimes the name of photographer is printed on the back of the picture. It would be nice, of course, to identify the person(s) in the photo, but that is an impossible task for the most part. However, it seems worthwhile to save some examples of the work of our local photographers. What I propose is that somebody should take these photos and spend a little time in trying to identify the people, especially if a name or names are given, but that most of the time should be spent in adding to the information about the photographer. Genealogist Mary Lewis made a list of about 90 early photographers from the area and the time span in which they were known to be active in San Bernardino County. Below are four example photographs, along with what little information is known about them.



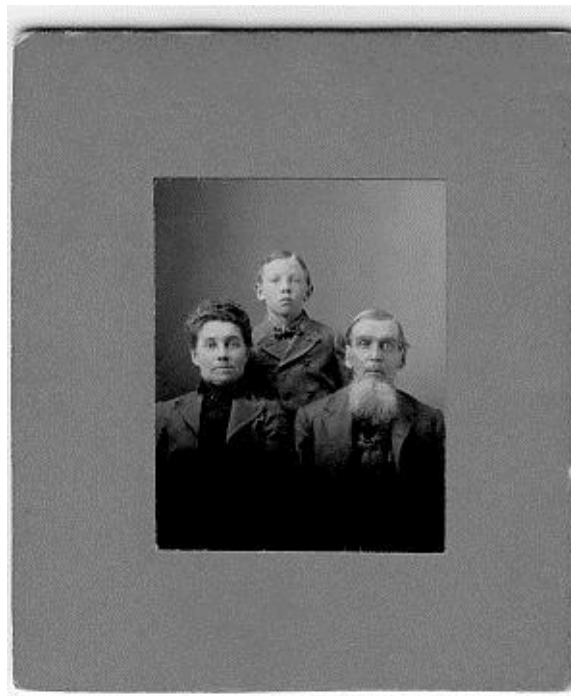
**Photograph of an unidentified young male.  
From the studio of F. B. Tinkle, 1907-1909.**



**Photograph of two unidentified females.  
From the studio of Benjamin Franklin Conaway, 1894-1900.**



**Photograph of Matt & Ellen Hemphill. Photographer not identified, and the only connection to San Bernardino is that the photo, when purchased, was mixed in with pictures from this area.**



**Photograph of Aunt Sula, Milo and Grandpa Estabrook.  
From the studio of Herbert L. Snow, 1899-1911.**

19. **San Bernardino Business History.** Transcribe a lengthy story that appeared in the January 1, 1892, issue of the San Bernardino *Courier*. The newspaper titled the story, "San Bernardino City: The Garden City of the South." It runs 56 pages, single spaced, and is a history of businesses and business owners. This is unusual subject matter, especially for its time. My wife Kathy and I have completed this project. It is in a searchable base (Microsoft Word) and will go on sale at the Heritage House Library soon.

—————End of History Projects—————

## **DEATH OF PETER WILD.**

It is with regret that I announce the death of Professor Peter Wild of the University of Arizona, Tucson, which occurred on February 23, 2009. Peter was an avid reader of Library News and he almost always sent me comments and observations. He will be missed.