

VERIFY !

I was so embarrassed ! I couldn't believe that I made that kind of mistake. One of the cardinal rules of genealogy was violated: accuracy of dates.

The occasion was a small birthday gathering for my mother. She was surrounded by children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. A professional photographer took pictures; a "ton" of food was prepared, flowers and a cake were delivered. Red roses on a decorated cake, red roses in a corsage and long-stem red roses for the table centerpiece. Birthday candles were the only thing I forgot (and she wouldn't have been able to blow them out anyway was my later rationale.)

"HAPPY 83rd BIRTHDAY  
Great! Grand! Mother"

was inscribed on the cake and we all sang "Happy Birthday" while she posed for pictures with the knife poised to cut the dessert.

But she wasn't 83; Mom was celebrating her 82nd! I was guilty of haste, assumption, lack of verification. . .(you get the picture?) A little simple arithmetic would have provided me with her age, a glance at the birthday book, or reference to her family group sheet.

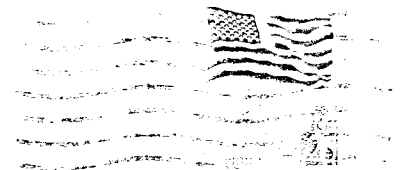
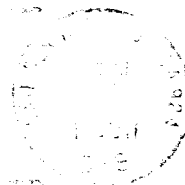
CALIFORNIA STATE GENEALOGICAL ALLIANCE  
NEWSLETTER

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To make this situation all the more humiliating (or humorous), I have an expensive computer and genealogy software program that automatically calculates dates. Anybody can look at printouts and group sheets and see the age. I "goofed" !

Mother was very forgiving (of course) and we all got a big laugh. However, this is a true story and a true illustration of how easily we can make mistakes with dates. Perhaps we can understand why discrepancies appear in our researched information. This will always serve as a reminder for me to verify, verify, verify.

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