

SAN RAMON VALLEY

GENEALOGICAL

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 305
Diablo, CA 94528-0305

President: Millie Freitas
Editor: Betty Vail

Meetings: 10:00 a.m.
3rd Tuesday of the month
(except August & December)
Danville Women's Club House
242 W. Linda Mesa Avenue
Danville, CA

Vol. XI No. 4

October 1995

NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 17, 1995

PROGRAM: Evolutionary Stages in Preservation and Maintenance
of Things Treasured

Are things you have saved getting frayed and worn? Do you want to save them for another generation to enjoy? At the October meeting Ann Marks will tell you how to preserve these treasures.

Ms. Marks, a specialist in the conservation of Japanese and Chinese screens and scrolls, has also completed an extensive course in Conservation of Archival and Library Materials at The London Institute. She has served internships in Ann Arbor, Michigan and The British Museum. Ms. Marks gives workshops in conservation of historical materials at the Berkeley Historical Society.

Jeannette Moses, Program Chairman

LAST MONTH: "Stepping Stones to Scotland" Jane Steiner

Peg Frazier, SRVGS member, retired teacher and avid genealogist, has made two recent trips to Scotland, the land of her ancestors. Since each trip lasted four weeks, she has had time to really get into her research, all of which was prior to 1820-30.

Peg has learned much about Scottish names. (1) The Scots have definite naming patterns for the children. The custom is not infallible, but it is quite reliable. (2) In Scotland women kept their maiden names and are listed by them in documents. (3) Middle names were usually nonexistent until 1830-40.

Most of the original books are housed at the Scottish Records Office in Edinburgh, a wondrous place to visit with open stacks and helpful, generous personnel.

The Old Parochial Records (OPR) of the Scottish Church (Presbyterian) range from 1580 to the present.

(They are also on a voluminous set of microfiche in Salt Lake City). Baptisms and marriages are indexed by counties. These records give the husband's profession, often the wife's name, and the names of the two witnesses, usually brothers or fathers of the parents, with their occupations. At the end of the Salt Lake film are the burial and morte cloth records. Since the morte cloths were rented, the quality chosen usually determined the financial status of the family. These records are not indexed, but many give the cause of death and many have interesting comments.

Kirk Session Records, minutes of the meetings of the elders, are not indexed but include many interesting insights into the lives of the congregation such as lengthy discussions of illegitimate children.

Sasine Records are land records. In 1687 a law
(Continued on page 27)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



OCTOBER



SRVGS EVENTS

- 10 Tuesday 10:00 Southern Interest Group (see page 27)
- 11 Wednesday 10:00 a.m. Irish and California Interest Groups. (see p.27)
- 17 Tuesday 10:00 a.m. SRVGS Meeting. Ann Marks will speak on preserving genealogical treasures; 12:30 p.m. ROOTS IV User Group; German Interest Group will meet at Vern Segelke's. 1121 Camino Tassajara, Danville this month.
- 24 Tuesday SRVGS Library Trip to National Archives, San Bruno. (see p.. 28)

OTHER EVENTS

- 12 Thursday 7:30 p.m. Contra Costa Co. GS meeting, City Council Chambers.
- 15 Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m. California Genealogical Society class (see below).
- 21 Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. "Researching Your Family History," presented by Livermore-Genealogical Society and the LDS Church at 6101 Valley Ave. in Pleasanton. Contact David or Jolene Abrahams 510-447-9386. (Details in September SRVGS Newsletter.)
- 22 Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m. CGS class (see below).
- 29 Sunday 1:00-4:00 p.m. CGS class (see below).



NOVEMBER

SRVGS EVENTS

- 7 Tuesday 10:00 a.m. SRVGS board meeting at Frances Lloyd's. ALL MEMBERS WELCOME.
- 14 Tuesday 10:00 a.m. SRVGS MEETING. Note the meeting will be on the second Tuesday for this month only. Joseph King will speak about Irish emigration with a special emphasis on Cork; 12:30 p.m. ROOTS IV User Group; German Interest Group (see p. 27) Southern Interest Group (see p. 27).
- 27 Monday 1:30 p.m. United Kingdom Meeting at Muriel James's, Lafayette. Please call Muriel at 510-283-2352 for directions.

OTHER EVENTS

- 9 Thursday 7:30 p.m. Contra Costa Co. GS meeting, City Council Chambers, Parkside Drive, Concord. Bernard Freeman will speak about Ellis Island and the Largest Human Migration in History.
- 10-13 Everton Publishers Baja Mexico Cruise from Los Angeles while you attend Genealogical Workshop at Sea. "Climbing Your Family Tree Can Be Fun." Contact The Cruise Company, 1-800-274-3866, Modesto, CA.

OFFICERS to Contact

President: Millie Freitas 837-2483
 Vice-Pres.: Irma Dotson 820-8344
 Membership: Diana Hancock 820-1424
 512 Zephyr Circle.
 Danville, CA 94526
 Annual Dues: Individual \$15.00
 Family \$20.00
 Membership year: June 1 to May 31

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Betty Vail
 824 Moraga Road
 Lafayette, CA 94949
 283-3596
 Mailing: Barbara Dittig 735-9610
 Lucy Carver: 837-3146
 The newsletter is published each month except August & December

CGS GENEALOGISTS CLASSES

This fall Bette G. Kot will conduct three classes especially geared for intermediate and advanced genealogists. Classes will be held at the California Genealogical Library 300 Brannan St., Suite 409 on Sundays 1:00-4:00 p.m.

- October 15: Reference Books
- October 22: Local Libraries:
 Sutro, CGS, Oakland History room, UC Berkeley's Doe Library, and others.
- October 29: LDS Family History Centers: Resources in Salt Lake City and Local FHC Branches.

The entire series is \$20.00 for CGS members, \$25.00 for non-members. The cost for a single class is \$8.00 for CGS members, \$10.00 for non-members.

The Library is at the north-west corner of Second and Brannan. Street parking is free and easily found on Sundays. The Library can be reached by BART but service on Sundays is not very good. Get off at Embarcadero, walk to First Street and take the #15 or #42 bus to Brannan; or get off at Montgomery and walk up Second Street to Brannan.

To reserve your place, call the CGS Library at 415-777-9936 Wednesday, Thursday or Friday.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

- GERMAN** - Meets at Barbara Johnson's (837-2153) every other month after the SRVGS meeting. The October meeting will be at Vern Segelke's, 1121 Camino Tassajara, Danville, 838-8570.
- IRISH** - Meets at 10:00 a.m. each second or third (announced) Wednesday at Patty Erickson's, 10 Ridge Pl., Pleasant Hill, 229-0889.
- CALIFORNIA** - Meets with the Irish Group.
- MAC COMPUTER GROUP** - To be announced. Contact Barb Dittig 735-9610.
- PUBLISHING** - Meets on the last Wednesday 10:00 a.m. when needed. If you would like help with a publishing project, contact Jane Steiner 283-0867.
- ROOTS USERS** - Official Comsoft ROOTS III/IV User's Group - Meets 12:30 a.m. on Tuesdays following the general meeting at Ruth Pfeiffer's, 59 Mariposa Ct., Danville, 837-5160.
- SOUTHERN** - Meets 10:00 a.m. each second Tuesday at Patty Erickson's, 10 Ridge Pl, Pleasant Hill. NOTE THE CHANGE OF ADDRESS.
- UNITED KINGDOM** - Meets on the fourth Monday every other month at 1:30 p.m. Check the calendar for the next meeting.



(Stepping Stones to Scotland)
was passed requiring the royal boroughs to keep their own records separate from the county records. These have not been filmed, but are readily available by writing to Edinburgh. Deeds, another type of record are not as useful, but all are indexed on LDS films. They sometimes contain miscellaneous papers such as marriage contracts or personal letters. Service of Heirs (S.H.) a the third type of sasine are indexed every 10 years under Retours. The are the records of the passing of land to the heir usually the eldest son.

Build Records Burgess & Guild Brethren (B.&G.B.) are also available on LDS film.

Commissariat Records (wills) covered only movable property. Heritable property was covered by the laws 1/3 to the widow, 1/3 to the children, and 1/3 to anyone else. LDS also has an index of these records.

Fire Insurance Records with resumes are in the city offices.

Tombstones are huge and contain much data. Some record four generations.

While in Scotland, you might want to see the Strathclyde Archives on the top floor of the Mitchell Library in Glasgow. Also, the Burns Memorial Museum in Irvine is an interesting old 1810 house.

For more information, rent the tape of this meeting.

BOOK REVIEWS Mary Jo Hostney

The new book in the Heritage Room in the Central Branch/Main Library include:

DEATH NOTICES, CONTRA COSTA CITY, 1860-1934

There are 4 volumes of Death Notices covering this period. These notices have been taken from local papers-the Byron Times, Walnut Creek Courier, Contra Costa Gazette, Martinez Herald, and the Richmond Daily Independent. Notices are listed alphabetically, and the volumes are filed under California in the Heritage room.

A COLLECTION OF UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA GENEALOGY AND FAMILY RECORDS, volumes 1 & 2, ed. by James E. Wooley, 2nd printing 1994, Southern Historical Press Inc., Greenville, S. C.

These are the first two volumes in a proposed series of titles on Upper South Carolina, formerly known as Old 96 District. These records are taken from the files of the late Pauline Young of Liberty, S. C., most of whose records are with the Ladson Memorial Library in Vidalia, GA. These files are listed alphabetically by surname, and consists of Probate Judge Office records from the early 1800's on-wills, probate records, payments of debts, etc. Of particular poignancy in wills are provisions for disposal of male and female slave, e.g., "I will that my negro Jack the privilege of choosing his master so he may (be) near his wife." The volumes are indexed.

* * *

Have you found that information handed down by your family is often inaccurate? Remember that the end of families is LIES.

SRVGS MEMBERSHIP NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

Quentin Marsden Alexander, husband of member Nancy Alexander, has become a member since he retired. He is researching the names Shipley in Hamilton Co. TN from 1820-1900 and Kreener/Köiner/Küner from Van Buren Co. and Warren Co., TN from 1800-1850.

Natalie H. Griffin 441 Sand Creek Rd., Brentwood, CA 94513. Phone number: 510-6324-5570. He is researching the name Griffin, locale and dates unknown, and Grout in MA, dates unknown.

Eleanor Parker, 5130 James Ave., Castro Valley, CA 94546-3745. Phone number: 510-582-9568. She is researching the name Tomsovic in Czechoslovakia and Chicago from 1800-1950 and MacHara in OH from 1880 to 1910.

Derek E. Rogelstad, 9819 Davona Dr., San Ramon, CA 94583. Phone number: 510-829-1880. He is researching the name Rogelstad in Norway and ND, dates unknown, and Hansen in Sweden and SD, dates unknown.
-Diana Hancock

ADDITIONS TO YOUR HANDBOOK

Barbara (Bea) D'Rand's new address is 104 Belmont, Ct., Southern Pines, NC 28387. She was given a life membership at her farewell luncheon.

Frances Becker is the new chairperson for the Southern Group (p. 2 in the Handbook). Her phone number is 510-934-4962. Frances stressed that the "Southern" covers a wide range of states from Maryland to Texas. If you are not sure that this is the group for you, call Frances.

OCTOBER LIBRARY TRIP

This month we are visiting the National Archives in San Bruno. Attendees will meet to car-pool at 9:00 a.m. in the rear parking lot of the Lucky's supermarket on Diablo Road, Danville, and, for those living closer to Oakland, at the Orchard Nursery upper parking lot in Lafayette. Bringing a brown-bag lunch is advisable. Questions? Call Manny Lindner at 510-837-4444.

NEW FOR THE COMPUTER GROUP

At the October meeting the IBM Roots IV group will be introduced to Visual Roots that uses windows and is relatively inexpensive, only \$48.00.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Although the Board meeting on October 3 was delayed ten minutes in order to hear "the jury's verdict" we did manage to take care of business! Somewhere else in this newsletter, you will learn why your president and the membership chairman have egg on their faces. Otherwise the society is doing great. A volunteer has offered to set up the Phone Tree. "Print, Publish and Preserve" sales keep dribbling in. Alice Romero and Ardith Steger are still collecting lists of member Resource Material available to loan to members. Jerry Sturgeon will be checking out microphone systems. Hopefully we'll have one to try out at the next meeting.

- Millie Freitas



RESOURCE MATERIALS

Don't forget to send a record of your resource material to Alice Tiso, 129 Samoa Ct., San Roman, CA 94583-1421. There will be extra forms at the meeting if you have lost yours.

WHO?



Millie and Diana were delighted when a new member volunteered to set up the Telephone Tree. The only problem is that the volunteer is so new that they can't remember her name. Would our new eager beaver please identify herself!

HAVE YOU RENTED A TAPE LATELY?

Nancy Alexander brought a new member to the meeting last month, her husband Quentin; she went home not only with him but also with a basket of assorted treats. She had rented a tape last month. If you borrow a tape that you find particularly interesting, please write a short review of it for the newsletter.



The society would like to extend its sympathy to John Arrol on the death of his wife Jane. John took time out from caring for her to share with us his insights on researching in Scotland.



RESEARCHING IN THE MIDWEST

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA ARCHIVES

Barbara Johnson reports that she has located several midwestern ancestors through the regional archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). There is no comprehensive list of which records have been filmed, but the ELCA Archives staff can determine if the specific ones you are interested in have been. Typically these films contain records of "ministerial acts", such as baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals. Some also contain a membership list and/or official meeting minutes.

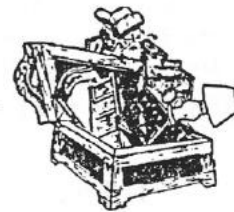
The microfilms can be borrowed for \$10.00 for a period of one month. The film will be shipped to you UPS. You will be responsible for the cost of mailing the film back to the ELCA Archives via UPS or registered U.S. mail. You may purchase a roll of microfilm according to the following procedures. 1) The lending copy of the film may not be purchased; a new unused film will be ordered for you. 2) The current cost is \$35.00 a film (including shipping costs). 3) If the congregation is still in existence, you must first secure each congregation's written permission to purchase a copy of their records on film.

For further information write to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL, 60631-4198; call 312-380-2977; or FAX 312-380-2977.

The following are related archives:
 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: Concordia Historical Institute, 801 De Mun Ave., Saint Louis, MO 63105-3199.
 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod: The Rev. Martin Westerhaus Archives, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 11831 N. Seminary Drive, 65W Mequon, WI 53092.
 Swenson Swedish Immigration History Center (Microfilm of Swedish American Congregations): Augustana College, Box 175, Rock Island, IL 61201.
 Vesterheim Center (Norwegian-American family history research): Vesterheim Genealogical Center and Naesseth Library, 415 Main Street, Madison, WI 53703.

KANSAS

The Kansas State Genealogical Society Library and Archives Division will have a new address after September 18, 1995. It will be located at 6425 SW 6th Street, Topeka, KS 66615-1099. The telephone number is 913-272-8681.



IOWA

Iowa's Secretary of State has joined forces with local genealogical societies in "The Great Treasure Hunt" to find homes for unclaimed items left in state deposit boxes. Items such as coins, jewelry and other valuables are auctioned off if owners are not located. The abandoned boxes also contain personal and sentimental items of interest to genealogists such as deeds, diaries and letters. Each chapter is being asked to take custody of items originally from its own county and make an attempt to locate family members or store them in local libraries or archives. IGS has agreed to handle any items from counties which do not wish to participate.

(From CSGA Newsletter, Vol. 13, No 6, p. 139)

MISSOURI

Tax Lists. Prior to the 1850's, purchasers of U. S. land in Missouri were exempt from land taxes for the next five years after purchase. If you find your ancestor on a Missouri tax list with livestock, etc. but no land, he may have purchased his land from the U. S. within the five years preceding the tax list. But if he is paying tax on the land, you know he has been there longer than five years.

(CSGA Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 7, p. 142)

ILLINOIS

Randolph County, Illinois Historical/Genealogical Book 1995 celebrates 200 years, from 1795-1995 in the county. It is available for purchase from the Randolph County Genealogical Society, 600 State Street, Room 306, Chester, IL 62233 for \$63.44 including tax and shipping.

(CSGA Newsletter, Vol. 13, No. 8, September 1995, p. 159)



NEBRASKA

Nebraska newspapers on microfilm may now be borrowed on interlibrary loan from the Nebraska State Genealogical Society, 15th & R Streets, Lincoln, NE 68509. Their files are available to out-of-state researchers.

(Immigrant Genealogical Society, No. 136, July 1955, p. 2)

The following article was written by one of our members for the SRVGS Newsletter and published in May of 1990. We're reprinting it as an addendum to the talk by Betty Maffei at our June meeting. Check with the History Center for updating on some items. [Other newsletters may copy with credit to the author and source]

HAVE YOU CHECKED THE CONTRA COSTA COUNTY HISTORY CENTER?

By Sandy Kimball

If you're researching in Contra Costa County, you should know about the Contra Costa County History Center.

Located at 1700 Oak Park Blvd., Room C5, Pleasant Hill (next door to Central Library and in the same complex with Hayward State's C.C. Co. campus), the Center contains thousands of local documents (22,000 catalog cards have already been created and volunteer catalogers have only scratched the surface, 35,000 photos and negatives of county people and places, books newspapers, maps and more.) The majority of the materials at the Center are from the Louis Stein Collection, which Louis and Mildred Stein gave to the Contra Costa County Historical Society five years ago.

From county censuses to Contra Costa tax books and court cases, from probates to obituaries and biographies -- local histories, untold numbers of newspaper clippings from every community in Contra Costa, this is the most complete and comprehensive history of our county in existence. Indeed, the scope of the work--thanks to Mr. Stein's lifelong addiction to collecting documents and photos of every description--may well be one of the largest available in any one local source in California.

Scholars, researchers, city planners, developers and realtors, archeologists and geologists, engineers, public information officers, area newspapers and many others, as well as members of the Board of Supervisors, East Bay Regional Parks, etc. are frequent visitors to the History Center.

While a modest fee is charged for research, anyone who joins the Contra Costa Historical Society (\$15.00 a year) can enjoy this service free.

The Center has purchased a computer so that before long research here will be even faster and more complete. So, if

you're fortunate enough to have ancestors who lived in Contra Costa, you can enjoy a wealth of records right in your own backyard. (Would that every community any of us is researching had but a fraction of the materials available here.)

The Center is open five days a week, but it's best to call (510/939-9180) for specific days and hours or to arrange for research.

MORE HISTORY SOCIETIES

In 1991 the Contra Costa Historical Society published a book on the city and local historical societies within the county. Titled *WAYS BACK - HISTORICAL SOCIETIES AND THEIR RESOURCES IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY*, it was written by Andrew H. Young of Alamo. Illustrations are by Lynn F. Garnica with page layout/design by John K. Swerdan.

The societies covered are Antioch, Clayton, Concord, Contra Costa, Crockett, Diablo Valley, East Contra Costa, El Cerrito, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Orinda, Pinole, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Point Richmond, Richmond, San Pablo, San Ramon Valley and Walnut Creek.

The softbound book contains just 58 pages but is a helpful summary of the collections of each society, its mailing address, location (and directions on how to get to each one), hours open, and a phone number.

Call the Society (939-9180) to check the availability of the book and where it may be purchased. The mailing address is Contra Costa Historical Society, P.O. Box 821, Concord CA 94522.

[I purchased my copy at Rakestraw Books in Danville a couple of years ago -- Dorothy Stanton]



IN THE SPIRIT OF HALLOWEEN

EVEN GRAVESTONES/CEMETERIES HAVE AN INTERESTING HISTORY

The practice of putting a stone on a grave arose not from piety but from fear; its origin was not respect for the dead but self-protection. After all precautions had been taken, the living were still afraid that the dead person might return and act against his former community. To make absolutely sure he stayed in his tomb, they weighed the soil down with a stone.

At first people were buried anywhere, generally near where they had died or had been killed. Thus graves could be found in most unexpected places.

Primitive society looked upon a dead person as something impure. To touch the body or even pass over its burial place was considered an act of dishonor. Thus they marked graves with stones meant to be warnings to passers-by to keep well away from the graves. At times to make the stones stand out more clearly, they were coated with lime.

This identification and consideration led to the origin of the cemetery. Special fields, removed from close human habitation, were set apart to isolate the dead in order to protect the living from contamination.

A later development was the workshop of graves. The tombstone was looked on as a home for the spirit. Later on people were no longer worried about getting defiled but became concerned that the grave might be desecrated. They placed stones on the grave to prevent animals from digging up the body. (*The Family Tree*, Vol. V, No. 3, June/July 1944, bonus page)

ACCESSORIES IN MOURNING

From the March 10, 1892 *Redwood City Democrat*

Very broad pocket handkerchiefs are now popular, and are more used than black bordered ones. Some of the newest mourning fans, in black, white and heliotrope, are made of ribbons quilled on the mounts, resembling at a distance, quill feathers. Many of the black curly ostrich feather boas are flicked with white feathers, lightly introduced. Jet fringe falls from some waist bands in deep points, one in front and the others on each hip. Braces of ribbon with bows on the shoulders, trim some of the short roundwaisted bodices that are taking the place of the long coat ones.

(SMCGS Newsletter, Volume 13, Issue 6, July 1995, p. 106)



TOMBSTONE WARNING

Many articles have been published that suggest using shaving cream to improve your ability to read and or photograph gravestones. According to David Chapin, a geologist on the internet, this is a BAD idea. Apparently the main ingredient is Stearic Acid which makes it more acidic than "acid rain." By the time the next rain comes and washes it away, the reaction is complete and the damage is already done. He also says not to use blackboard chalk as it contains gypsum, which can convert to acid under some weather conditions. Don't use soil either, as it can sometimes be highly acidic. He suggests using only inert or neutral materials to enhance your photos, such as talc or powdered limestone. (SMCGS Newsletter, Volume 13, Issue 8, September 1995, p.137.)

YOUR OBITUARY

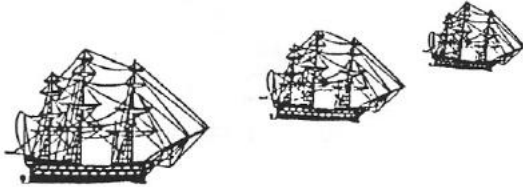
Have you ever considered what is going to appear in YOUR obituary? a recent reading of obituaries in a weekly newspaper that has been published in Oklahoma since a time previous to statehood (1907) showed some of the usual problems. Many of those obituaries will be of scant use to a future genealogical researcher. Here are some of the facts frequently omitted:

1. The woman's name, if she is married.
2. No title to show she was not married.
3. Age is frequently given in years only; date of birth is seldom mentioned.
4. No summary of where the deceased live.
5. Parents' names are not mentioned.
6. Deceased siblings are not mentioned.
7. Interests sometimes are mentioned if they sound good to the person inserting the obituary. Otherwise they are left out.

Write your own obituary. Keep it up to date. The newspapers do this on celebrities; we can do it ourselves. Set aside the payment necessary to insure insertion of the whole thing. Make doubly sure by instructing the family as to your wishes. (Somos Primos, Summer 1995, via CSGA Newsletter, NO. 13, No. 8, Aug/ 1995, p. 153.)



ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



IN HONOR OF COLUMBUS DAY, OCTOBER 12
(To be celebrated on October 9 this year)

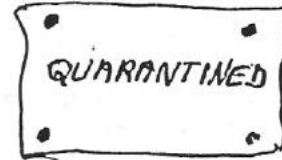
Christopher Columbus was the world's most remarkable salesman. He started out not knowing where he was going. When he got there, he didn't know where he was. When he returned, he didn't know where he had been. He did all this on borrowed money and managed to get a repeat order. (SMCBS Newsletter, Vol. 13, Issue 7, p. 119)

Spotted on the CGS Bulletin Board: GENEALOGIST NEVER
DIE--THEY JUST LOSE THEIR CENSUS.

SAN RAMON VALLEY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
BOX 305
DIABLO, CA 94528-0305



FIRST CLASS MAIL



QUARANTINED

The inhabitants of this place have been stricken with Genealogical Fever, a deadly and infectious disease.

Symptoms: Notepaper stuffed in pockets and files; heart palpitations at the sight of gravestones and old trucks filled with letters; bloodshot eyes from excessive microfilm exposure; erratic speech patterns punctuated with pilgrims and princes; cold sweat upon the arrival of the daily mail.

Incurable!

(From Mary Jo Hosteny)