

C.R. 1996

BENTON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Twenty-five years later there is no record of the effort and planning that went on, probably during the summer of 1971. It seems that a growing interest in family history brought a number of people together, among them Mary Peffer, member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and Erma Lee Brown, genealogist, and a member of the End of Trail Researchers. Meetings were held. Velma Parsons wrote that an early planning meeting of about a dozen women met at the home of Lotta Chapman and Celia Coon. Names mentioned by Velma were Harriet Moore, Hazel Beals, Bessie Murphy, Bernice Robison, Clara Jans, Edith Hughes, Edna Wiese, Jo Zadina, Mary Peffer, and the hostesses.

At the May 1982 meeting Velma reminisced about those early days. She said that subsequent planning meetings were held in the Elizabeth Ritchie Room of the Corvallis Library. This activity led to the first publicly announced meeting, to be held on 11 September 1971. Unfortunately only the newspaper announcement remains as a record of that meeting.

It is possible that a Nominating Committee was formed at that September meeting. It is sure that officers were elected at the October meeting. The first officers were:

- President - Velma Parsons
 - Vice President - Celia Wilson Coon
 - Secretary/Treasurer - Josephine Zadina
 - Directors - Hazel D. Beals, Harriet Moore, and Bernice W. Robison
- Also present at that second meeting were Mary Peffer, Norma Pennington, Lavohn M. Watts, and Edna Wiese.

The End of Trail Researchers, based in Salem at the time, had as its main purpose publishing Oregon Records. A secondary purpose was to travel to other Oregon cities to assist with forming new groups. Erma Lee Brown traveled, and became an early member. Thus it was that our Society came into being as the Mid-Valley Genealogical Society, with members from Albany, Alesia, Corvallis, Cresswell, Eugene,

Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Pullman, WA.

The first program, on 9 October, was presented by Edna Wiese, who told of her recent trip of discovery in Germany. On November 13, Betty Wilson outlined the personal qualities needed and steps to take in compiling a family record in "Beginning of a Growing Record." On 11 December, Billie Sneed Webb told the group of "The Seven Steps to Genealogical Research."

In addition to socializing and personal research, the group expected to "cooperate with the Benton County Historical Society in the preservation and publication of area history." (The Corvallis-Gazette Times, Tuesday, 19 October 1971.)

Charter Membership closed on 31 December 1971 with these members: Ruth H. Arnold, Hazel D. Beals, Eugene Mitch Beard, Gladys Bierman, Leona Brandenburg, Ednah L. Breckon, John Breckon, Marjorie Burianek, Lotta Chapman, Celia W. Coon, Stanley P. Farwell, Aaron Glasgow, Elaine Heckart, Edith Hughes, Clara Jans, Alene Lewis, Peggy Mason, Harriet Moore, Bessie G. Murphy, Velma Parsons, Mary Peffer, Bernice Robison, James Russell, Donna F. Soule, Ysabel Thomas, Glenn Ware, Louisa 'Billie' Webb, Gene Westfall, Harriette Westfall, Edna Wiese, Betty Wilson, Marjorie M. Wink, Josephine Zadina, all of Corvallis; Elizabeth Akin, Ruby E. Boyes, Merle Britten, Joel Fosdick, Margaret Fosdick, Mildred Blair Hawkins, Ruth Lines Motley, Rex Palmer, Louis St. Dennis, Jean Vanderpool, of Albany; Mrs. J. W. Holbrook, Alesia; Margery Akin Crawford, Cresswell; Lois Inman Baker, Maxine Simmons Bell, Addie Dyall, Mrs. Edward Winn, of Eugene; Harley Haskins, Helen Haskins, Veva Large, Edith R. Mill, John Miller, Norma P. Pennington, of Lebanon; Erma Lee Brown, of Salem; Carla Healy, of Sweet Home; and Frances Milne, Pullman WA.