

THE BENTON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - PART 2 -

When the Mid-Valley Genealogical Society was organized, the members chose to organize in such a way that the group would be as independent as possible. The members did not form a Constitution. They did not incorporate. Though there is a list of Charter Members, the ones who became members in the first three months, before 1 January 1972, there is no charter. Names of Charter Members were published in the January 1996 News Letter.

Those first members drew up a set of By-Laws to govern the activities of the new Society. One Article has been eliminated; the other nine remain.

The first set of By-Laws was put together during the first months of the organization. A copy is mounted in Historical Book 1, in March, 1972. By March 1973 the group had grown. Articles needed to be reworded. Changes were made. In all, the By-Laws have been amended five times: March 1973, September 1974, March 1984, March 1990 and December 1995. Some of the Articles read differently now; a few read much the same as the original.

In the beginning, the Mid-Valley Genealogical Society was the one such organization between Salem and Eugene, and members were from Alsea to Sweet Home, Eugene and Cresswell, and one from Pullman, WA. Later, Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Albany groups were formed, which eventually led to one of the latest changes, the change of name to **Benton County Genealogical Society**, which better reflects the nature of the present group.

The End of Trail Researchers sponsored the Mid-Valley Genealogical Society. By 1974 the new group no longer needed a sponsor, so Section A was deleted from Article II, but the Society maintained a paid subscription and received the quarterly publication, Oregon. The entire Article II was deleted in 1984.

This genealogical group was formed as "non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian", and remains so, with the words rearranged.

One early purpose of the group was to "assist each other in genealogical research through association, inspiration and material exchange and interactions." This Section of Article III has remained unchanged. A Newsletter from 1974 states that Mildred Hawkins, Elizabeth Akin and Edna Wiese prepared Beginner's Kits for newcomers and beginners to promote this objective. At one time a committee of six researchers (three were DAR specialists) helped the beginners start their charts.

By 1974, as members shared more and more information, the group added Addenda to Article III, Section A, to "protect property, privacy, and rights" of both the Society and individuals.

The provision pertaining to working with the End of Trail Researchers in publishing bulletins and materials remained until 1984. Cooperation with the Benton County Historical Society in preserving and publishing of local history remains in nearly the same form, but the provision to assist the Corvallis City Library in obtaining genealogical material now reads: "To cooperate with the Benton County Library in matters pertaining to genealogical research."

In 1971 the Corvallis Library had a limited collection in the Genealogy section. The Society assisted the Library in selecting genealogical books. The Society bought books, and placed them in the Library for all to use. For a time the 2nd Vice-President was responsible for choosing books from the Genealogy shelves for use in the Society's monthly workshops, putting them onto a library cart to bring to the Ritchie Room. At the close of the meeting s/he saw that all books were returned. Mary Buchanan, a librarian who was also a Society member performed this service part of the time.

Membership in the Mid-Valley Genealogical Society was open to anyone interested in genealogical research. That Section of Article V reads the same today. In 1972 members not paid up by July 1st were dropped. In 1984 the date was advanced to January 15th.