

# THE BENTON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - PART 5 -

## Programs and Projects

Meeting days for the Mid-Valley Genealogical Society included a program centered around research for ancestors. There are so many titles; it is hard to choose.

The earliest programs were prepared and presented by members. In the first, titled "Trip and Research in Germany", Edna Wiese shared the thrill of finding relatives in northwest Germany, as she described their way of life. Other members built programs about other places, as in the Carolinas, and in Eastern Canada. These successes were an inspiration.

One program was held at 10:00 am at Kerr Library on the Oregon State University Campus. The roster of members present is found inside the cover of the Library Handbook. The Map Room on the first floor, with the nearby microfilm readers seems to have been the highlight. Others programs told of research in the Fort Wayne and the Indiana State Libraries; in the National Archives in Washington, D. C.; in Salt Lake City as well as in the Family History Centers in several churches of the Latter Day Saints.

"How to" programs with such interesting titles as "Beginning of a Growing Record", "Seven Steps to Genealogical Research", and "Preserving Family Memorabilia" guided members, as did information on preparation of materials and manuscripts for printing:

Vital Statistics, important to building a family record, can be found, we were told, in many records, from the obvious to the obscure, public and private. The Oregon State Archivist described research in public records as well as changes in the State Archives.

Other times we heard about research of Native American culture and dances, the Lewis and Clark Journey, The Oregon Trail, and Oregon Land Claims. We learned about early school records, one-room schools of Benton County, the histories of Linn and Benton Counties, and the connection between Benton and Lake Counties. We learned of

Handwriting Analysis, and how personality traits show in handwriting; of using photography in Genealogy. Further topics were how to record oral history, and how to restore and preserve old books and materials. One speaker told of errors she had made in research, while another spoke of changes of names when immigrants arrived from northern Europe.

Several programs were on cemeteries. One speaker suggested that individuals or groups might adopt an old cemetery to preserve the history of pioneer families. Several years later the Society decided to conduct censuses of cemeteries in Benton County for which none had been done, and to publish the results. That project was completed in 1990, with the printing of a total of five books. Military records, extracted from the first five volumes, were published in a separate book, and an all name index for the set was completed in early 1996.

In 1976 the Society applied for a grant of \$1000 from Oregon State University Folk Club Thrift Shop, with money received to be used in indexing the newspapers of Corvallis. No record exists in the Historical Books as to receipt and use of money, but the project was completed, with the printed books in our library.

Another project, completed in January 1991, was publishing the 1910 Census of Benton Co. in Soundex. According to the newsletter, four books were printed.

A fourth, current project, is that of extracting vital statistics from newspapers of Benton County. The microfilm, given by the Corvallis Gazette-Times, are all the available rolls from about 1865 to 1979. The work is being done by volunteers, who enter the data onto forms. An index with birth and death dates transcribed to the Benton County Historical Society's computer data base, will be available in the Historical Society Library.