

MINUTES OF  
THE BENTON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD MEETING, MONDAY, 3 June 1996  
Dameris Reynold's Home

The meeting was called to order by membership chairmperson, Danell Aukerman. Minutes of the May board meeting were read and approved.

**Members Present:**

Judy Beals, Leila Crawford, Ron Edwards, Becky Kiger, Gene Kelsey, Dameris Reynolds, Jean Grube, Ed Stratton, Danell Aukerman and Maybelle Marchting.  
Ken Bielman, President, was absent.

**Treasurer's Report:**

As of May 31, 1996, the current balance is \$1240.03

**Program:**

We will be honoring our charter members and celebrating our 25th anniversary.

**Host/Hostess:**

We need to bring a salad for the luncheon. Cake will be served at our celebration.

**Book Committee:**

No new books were bought this time.  
The committee will meet the first week of July.

**Library:**

Jean shared the new books that arrived and the books donated by members.  
Jean requested that books are not checked out for the whole summer. Although we won't have general meetings during July and August, books can be returned on Tuesday.

**Merchandising:**

We made \$400 at the garage sale. The next garage sale will be in September at Dameris house.

**Queries:**

Maybelle is searching Jacob Swenk who died in Lane County. She hasn't received any new queries.

**Newsletter:**

Ed shared what is going in the newsletter and asked if there were any additions.

**Membership:**

Four new and one family have been added since last month.

**Unfinished Business:**

We clarified the expectations for the general meeting program and celebration.

**New Business:**

Ed Stratton talked about a new CD-Rom that is available and very cheap. Danell will make copies of the order form to distribute at the general meeting. Individual or group orders can be made.

The next meeting will be in September

Respectfully submitted,

Leila Crawford, Secretary

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## OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY

### A Time to Remember

The year was 1971. We had the time and the means to wonder about our roots. Retired persons were making pilgrimages to places of origin and a movement was building--interest in local history, family history and the story of our lives.

I saw a notice in a newspaper about a genealogy group that was forming in Corvallis. All interested people were invited to attend. I was interested. I had found a wealth of family records and stories and now it was my responsibility to erect the Family Tree upon which these could be preserved. I needed help.

On a Saturday in October, 1971, I went to the Elizabeth Ritchey Room on the west end of the Corvallis Public Library. It was the beginning of what would become the Mid-Willamette Valley genealogy Society, and it would draw from a wide area across the valley. The End of the Trail Researchers, an established organization for the preservation of records and publication in Oregon were sponsors and provided guidance until the organization was established. I found informed researchers, and a desire to assist others like myself who had much to learn. I became a member, little knowing what adventure lay ahead.

In 1972, the first set of By-Laws were accepted by the Society. Representing the dedication and concerns of the founding group, it provided a structure to shape the organization.

The Genealogy Society should be a non-profit, non-political and non-sectarian organization. Its purpose should be to assist each other in genealogical research through association, inspiration and material exchange and interactions. It would strive to protect property, privacy and the rights of the society and individuals. It would be active in the preservation and publication of local history.

I would learn that because of the need that Velma Parsons had with her own family research, she had sought help from Mary Peffer. Together with Harriett Moore, former archivist of OSU and Celia Coon, they began to make plans and drew in other researchers and historians, including Harley and Helen Haskins of Lebanon. Several had experience with DAR records. A committee of six was appointed to help beginners with charts and methods. Workshops would become a continuing activity.

A mutual policy was developed with the Corvallis Public Library who would shelve a collection of reference books and materials. The Society began to purchase books for the collection, based upon the needs of the members and the demands of a well-rounded collection. Velma served as President throughout 1972. In 1973 Erma Lee Brown (Akers) of Salem, with experience with the End of the Trail Researchers, stepped into the presidency to contribute her expertise to the growing society.

Meanwhile, many of us were gaining knowledge and know-how in Genealogy. During the 1972-73 school year, about 14 of us studied with Joan Harris in a course call Genealogy and research at LBCC. I recall developing friendships <sup>with</sup> Velma Parsons, Edna Wiese, Ruth Lines Motley, Betty Moore, Elizabeth Akin, Jill Fosdick and Dorothy Blust at that time. Joan Harris came from Gladstone to teach the class, leading us through

in-depth methods of record-keeping and research technics. Her mentoring made it possible for Elizabeth Akin to continue teaching genealogy for LBCC.

Special speakers at our monthly meetings brought us into contact with genealogy and historical concerns. David Duniway, then State Archivist, spoke to us on his struggles to save public records in many parts of the state of Oregon, and the importance of the State Archives.

I became president, January 1974. Susan Taylor was vice-president in charge of hospitality and programming, Betty Moore was secretary and Dorothy Blust, treasurer. During the year, Edna Wiese was appointed to the office of 2nd vice-president in charge of hospitality and bringing books in from the Library. Such people as Ralph Van Cleve were eager and ready to assist as needed. It was a year of putting the machinery of the society into action. We worked hard to produce a functioning organization that would achieve our purposes for the society and for individual members.

Since some had profited from seminars given by other societies, we decided to hold a seminar. In April of 1974, arrangements were made for a two-day seminar at the Forum at LBCC. Arlene Eakles and NANCY Poolman of the Genealogical Institute of Salt Lake City presented three sessions with hand-outs and purchaseable materials. These sessions broadened and extended our vision, giving us insights on the changing attitudes toward genealogy and its acceptance as part of the discipline of history. At a later date, Eakles returned for another session at which 69 attended from around the valley. With Johnni Cerny, Arlene published The Source; a guidebook to American Genealogy.

In 1975, Elizabeth Akin took over the president's chair. The program and the membership kept growing. As the Bicentennial of the

founding of the U.S. approached, we were caught up in the importance of our part in writing a new history of our country. The Society voted to place a display at the Horner Museum on the campus of OSU. One of the members built a case and I assisted Edna Wiese in arranging a large display which drew much favorable comment.

In 1975, I again took the chair, and in 1977, it passed on to Theodore Gump. For a number of years, Elizabeth Akin held workshops for beginners at each meeting. This provided time for sharing and learning for anyone. There were members working on cemetery records, marriage and death records. Far more was happening than just work on individual family trees. There was much concern for community and state problems for collecting and preserving records. Joan Mueller had joined us and she took over the project of indexing back issues of the Gazette Times. Several, including Mr. Striker, devoted many long hours to this task and due to Joan's perseverance, it was completed and published.

It was about this time that I was presenting workshops and seminars through LBCC of Book repair and preservation. There was much interest within the society as this provided fellowship as well as profitable projects in preserving heirlooms. And I must add, that over the years, Eugene Beard took care of publicity, attracting new members and reporting programs and activities of the society.

In the late seventies, the Library could no longer take control of the book collection nor allow us to have the use of the Ritchey Room, because of expanding demands within the library. Arrangements were made to meet in the basement of the First Christian Church. Mr. Striker built a large cabinet which was placed in space allotted us. Members cataloged books, maps, journals and leaflets and made these available to members.

The nineties brought more changes. The Benton County Historical Society was setting up a museum in the abandoned College <sup>in Oshkosh</sup>. The Genealogy Society had the privilege of placing their collection there where it could be used more freely, so the meetings have also been changed to be held in that area. Over the years, the By-Laws had been updated to fit changing times and membership, but basically, its purpose has remained the same. Other genealogy societies had been organized such as one in Sweet Home, one in Lebanon and the Linn Society in Albany. It was decided to change to name to The Benton County Genealogy Society.

Work has continued on record keeping, even though the membership has changed. The Society received The History Makers' Award in 1992 for indexing the 1910 Census records for Benton County. Cemetery Records of Benton County have been completed and published in five volumes by Becky Kiger and her committee with work still being done on some military records. A special Canadian Interest Group has met for many years and still continues.

Over these 25 years, records have become available on micro-film, micro-fiche and then computers. The L.D.S. Church has collected parish records in practically every country of the world, bringing this collection together in Salt Lake City. Electronic devices provide quick and easy access to records and information in a way never dreamed of in earlier times. The possibilities seem unlimited. Yet we still need to write and preserve our histories and our stories. We need to know who we are and develop our understanding of our communities. No machine is going to do the work of well-documented research nor provide the satisfaction of personal involvement. Benton County Genealogy Society has come a long way in 25 years and I hope the dedication and wisdom of the Founding Group will not be forgotten.