

## Highlights

- Dowsing for Graves
- Copyright Problems Looming
- Mesa County Records Online

## Inside

- German Query Helpful
- Computer Corner: Y2K Solutions
- New Officers

## THE MESA DWELLERS

Mesa County Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 841

Grand Junction, CO 81502

## CALENDAR

### MARCH

11 Jim Wetzel, Director, Delta Historical Museum will discuss what the Museum has that is of interest to genealogists, and their newspaper collection.

Installation of new officers.

### APRIL

8 The French In Canada; Research Made Easy - A Step by Step Method. Pat Kemper, President, CCGS.

### MAY

13 Dan Davidson, Director, Museum of Northwest Colorado will talk about his current biographical research projects and the holdings of the museum.

*Note: Due to remodeling at the C.D. Smith building it may be necessary to move our meeting place. Check with Donna Roberts 242-0971 to be sure. Otherwise, all meetings are at 7:00 p.m. at the C.D. Smith Building, 5<sup>th</sup>. and Ute.*

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Jody Nestler

February has rolled around again. By the time you receive this newsletter, elections will have been held and a new slate of officers will be in place. It has been an honor to serve as your President for the past year. As with all responsibilities, there have been satisfactions and frustrations involved.

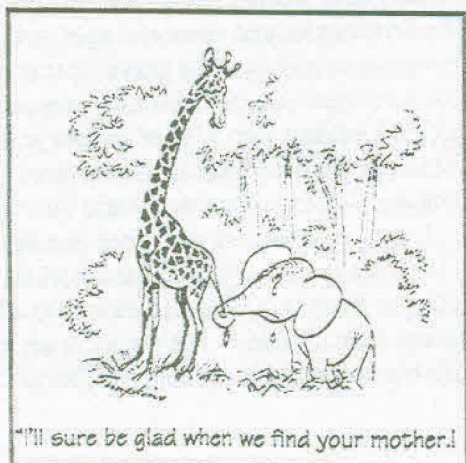
This organization is functioning, forward-looking and vital. Attendance at meetings has been good and we have a large membership. Ongoing projects include the cemetery project. All of those who have assisted in this project throughout the years deserve a big hand; hopefully, work will continue to fruition. We all know what a help this type of information is to the researcher looking for those difficult to find ancestors. I want to thank all the officers for their diligence and assistance. They have all been ready and willing to help when asked. Our programs have been outstanding. Anyone who has ever served on a committee knows how time consuming that can be.

Many thanks to the members who have assisted with various functions throughout the year. It is always the dedication of the members which makes an organization viable. We have an increasing presence within the wider Colorado Genealogical scene. Dennis Jenkins serves as Chairman of the Memorial Hall of Fame - David S. Vogels Award for the Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies. Juanita Moston is now the Quarterly Editor for the Colorado Genealogical Society.

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have enjoyed another Family History Fair. See you at future meetings.

## WELCOME NEW OFFICERS

Rick Sheldon has been elected President for the 1999/2000 year, he is doing double duty - and in some cases triple, etc. duty, in that he is also your Computer Editor. Please get with Rick if you have any suggestions or comments on the Society. Check the back page for all the officers.





## ORAL HISTORY QUESTIONS

How many times have you known a friend or a family member that you were sure had all the answers to all your questions, but when you talked with them they just didn't seem to remember things? It could be that the questions we ask are not the ones that are the key to getting just what we want. Consider some of the following questions the next time you interview someone.

- Were you named after someone, or did you have a nickname?
- What chore did you really hate to do as a child?
- What was your favorite nursery rhyme?
- Did you or your friends have a special hang-out where you liked to spend time?
- Do you remember anything that your children did when they were small that really amazed you?
- What is your favorite hymn? Why?
- What is the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you?
- What is your favorite flavor of ice cream? Where did you first taste it?
- If you had to pick a label for your family members, who best fits the following descriptions? The best cook; hardest-worker; the quietest; the funniest; the animal lover; the best story-teller.

These suggestions, and others, come from *The Life and Times of Winnie Lackore*, written by Joanne Todd Rabun, 1993. They included a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class project of her daughter and a college-level Women's Studies class project of her nephew. Rabun says that the more specific and less threatening the questions, the easier it is to start the flow of memories. Often the memories of other people and how they became involved in the events will come back easier if they are not the subject of a direct question.

## DOWSING FOR GRAVES by Juanita Moston

The Random House College Dictionary defines dowsing as: "see divining rod, a rod, esp. a forked stick, commonly of hazel, supposed to be useful in locating underground water, mineral deposits, etc. Also called dowsing rod." This is the official definition, but I know for a fact that any willow branch, metal rod, or coat hanger will work just as well as a hazel stick. The first time I tried finding water I used a couple of sticks from a willow or Tamarisk bush. Held, one stick in each hand, usually with one end through the palm of the hand and the end sticking upward with your thumb on it you simply walk slowly about until the outermost ends of the twigs cross over each other at a point where water could be found. I tried to keep them from doing this, I held on as tight as I could, but nothing stopped the ends from crossing. Another person with me could not get them to do anything unless I held his hands - then they crossed, not as fast, but they crossed, and at the same location I had them cross.

After having said all this I have no doubt that the

following story has some grain of truth to it.

Robert Grantham insists he is not a graveyard ghoul or an occultist; he is a pharmacist, in Jackson, MS, but he does have an uncanny ability to find ancient grave sites. He also claims to be able to tell which way the body lies in the grave, and if it is male or female.

He claims to be the first to admit he doesn't know why his simple tools - dowsing rods - work. He says, "Keep in mind that they won't work for everyone." He uses two metal rods coated with wax, or at times a metal coat hanger to locate graves.

But for him, they have located suicide and murder victims, persons of different lifestyles and races and ages, and, even animals. Using the same principal for grave location that you would use to locate a water source Grantham uses two 36-inch sections of steel welding rod, 3/32 of an inch in diameter which can be obtained from the local hardware store. Clothes line or a straightened clothes hanger will work, but it must be made of steel. At one end he bends a six-inch handle at a 90-degree angle. He holds one wire in each hand with the long portion protruding in front. He bends his elbows at a 90-degree angle, away from his body. His forearms are straight out in front. Both arms and rods are held parallel to the ➡



ground, and the rods are parallel to each other.

Ritual says most cemeteries bury a body with the head to the west and the feet to the east - but not in all cases will you find this to be true.

Grantham approaches a suspected grave site at about midpoint, walking slowly. He cautions that you need to pick a day with little or no wind. As he walks over the suspected grave site the two wires will cross. He then backs up, and approaches a little to one side, if he is still over the body the wires will cross again. He then slowly outlines the length of the body. He says "As you cross over, one rod will go straight ahead and the other will point toward the body." He has been known to determine the actual length within two or three inches.

Using red, white and blue poker chips he marks each point. Next, he extends only one wire or rod overhead, he then walks slowly toward the midpoint. The rod will slowly turn clockwise if a woman is buried below, or counterclockwise for a male.

Again, starting at midpoint, holding one wire only straight from his body, about waist high, it will turn toward the head of a female, or the feet of a male, he claims. Again he marks the spot with a poker chip.

Grantham's first encounter with a grave dowser was in Fox River Grove, IL, where one dowser has produced such dependable accuracy that the local courts have accepted her findings to decide whether to permit a developer to build over possible grave sites. Some companies have paid up to \$700 per potential grave site to determine the same thing using the conventional method of taking soil samples, core samples, examining old records, etc.

Grantham claims to have found several hundred graves to date, the oldest one was 175 years old. He has asked nuclear physicist/engineers and others if they have an answer as to why this works when complicated electronic equipment and knowledgeable operators don't have the same results. He was pleased to note that the methods recommended were deemed highly inaccurate as well as expensive, so, he says, "It remains for us amateurs, with a couple of metal rods or bent coat hangers, to find Grandpa's grave."

If you are not a believer may I recommend that you try using his directions and see if you can locate a known water source, like your sewer line, before you go out to the cemetery. But, from personal experience I can tell you

that it makes a believer out of you!

Source: *The U.S. Internet Genealogical Society bulletin*, Dec. 1, 1998, pg. 5.

## NEW COPYRIGHT BILL WILL CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR RESEARCHERS

Until 1979, the copyright term was 56 years: one 28 year term, extendible for an additional 28 years. In 1978 all work created in or before 1922 were in the public domain.

Now, largely due to the urging of the Walt Disney company, the Gershwin heirs, and others concerned with their rights to keep exclusive ownership of intellectual property, Congress has retroactively extended copyright terms to a total of 95 years. The first change was in 1979 when copyright terms were extended retroactively 19 years; this meant material from 1923 had not entered the public domain. Again, recently, Congress extended the terms for 20 years.

Originally, the material that was written in 1923 would have entered the public domain on Jan. 1, 1979; material written in 1924 will not now enter the public domain till Jan. 1, 2020. That is, if Congress doesn't decide to extend the term a third time.

We are all excited with the new technology available that allows us to research online databases and CD-ROM disks, but now these kinds of informational sites are being prohibited from reproducing materials printed after 1922. Even newspaper obituaries after 1922 will now be in copyright for another 20 years. We will now have to wait 20 more years before they can be put online for free.

Older genealogies or histories which we might find useful can not be reprinted or placed online for an additional 20 years; and that obscure piece of work whose copyright status is uncertain, or the heirs who cannot be tracked down, can not be placed online for an additional 20 years.

So much for our wonderful electronic media that has so far given many of us so much information. Thank whomever you like for this debacle. It seems as though we are once again up against that proverbial Chinese Wall.



## GERMAN QUERY PROVES HELPFUL

By Susan Martinez

There comes a time when you reach the end of the line and don't quite know where to turn for help.

After researching for many years on my German Hoffman line, I still have not been able to find John Hoffman's parents' names, or when they came to America, or where they came from in Germany.

I did, however, have a couple of leads that looked helpful. The problem was, what to do with them.

Lead number one: I had a pedigree chart from another Hoffman researcher not only listing names and dates, but also German village names. The drawback was that the only connection between our families was the great aunt of the researcher was the second wife of my John Hoffman. On the off chance that some of this information would prove useful I took the names of the villages and pin-pointed them on a map of Germany.

Lead number two: I had the 1847 marriage record for a Maria Hoffmann and Johannes Oestreich at the United Church of Christ, in New Orleans, Louisiana. John Hoffman and Catherine Rueffer were married at the same church in 1851. Although John and Catherine's marriage record had no additional information, the one for Maria and Johannes gave the names of their parents and the name of the villages where they were born in Germany. I took these villages and pin-pointed them on the map. The villages from the pedigree chart and the ones from the marriage record were very close together (not until later did I learn just how close).

Now, I decided I needed someone with German expertise to advise me if I was finally ready to start researching in Germany, and, if I was, where should I begin.

I wrote to Mr. Horst A. Reschke, the German consultant for the Heritage Quest Magazine. In my letter I included a time-line for John Hoffman going year-by-year - listing the events in his life that took place. I made copies of the marriage records for John and Catherine Hoffman and Maria Hoffmann and Johannes Oestreich, along with the translations; and a copy of the pedigree chart for the other Hoffman family.

I knew I needed to send enough information on these families to make sense, but, I didn't want to overwhelm him either.

In drafting my letter to Mr. Reschke I explained I didn't have all the required information on my ancestor, but with the additional information on Maria Hoffmann's marriage and the other Hoffman family, I asked if this might be a place to start researching.

I pointed out that the villages in Germany were very close together and asked if I was 'jumping the pond' too quickly, or should I do more research here in the States; and I pleaded for his help.

I was just sure as I put the letter in the mailbox that I would get an answer telling me I was crazy. At this point though, even that would be a help.

Nine days later, I receive a very nice three-page letter, signed by Mr. Reschke himself!

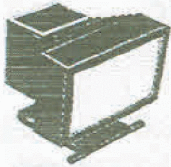
I wasn't crazy! (matter of opinion) after all, I could very well be on the right track. Since I knew the place names of the other Hoffman families that would, indeed, he said, be a place to start researching. He looked at each village name and told me where to find parish records (all available from the Family History Library). I could use the local library for that. All five villages were within four miles of each other, and he concluded there very well could be a connection. He suggested I not abandon the search for the parents of John Hoffman, but continue, and if the Hoffman families were related it would soon emerge.

I certainly feel this query was worth the time and the money spent. Mr. Reschke gave me encouragement and new places to research. And he asked that I keep in touch with my findings.

## NEED HELP GETTING STARTED...MENTOR PROGRAM COULD BE THE ANSWER

A mentor program to assist the beginning genealogist was established at the February meeting. A committee will be chosen soon to begin putting the program together. The committee will develop a syllabus and helpful hints to get the beginner started on the right foot. It was said those new researchers should have the advantage of better records than some of the older researchers because there are so many new softwares and forms and ideas to document and preserve information. We hope we can help some beginners. As it stands now the program will team new member genealogy researchers with a member of the Society for a short time.





## COMPUTER CORNER

By Rick Sheldon  
Y2K ... START PLANNING NOW

This article will come out at almost the end of what is know as the first quarter.

What this means to all of you, is that there is about nine months of the year left. Then the MILLENNIUM!!!! Yes, another Y2K (which stands for Year 2000) synopsis. Now, for some with home computers, this will affect you minimally, but I would be willing to put up money that unless you wait till December '99 and buy a brand new computer and load it with the latest version of brand new software not one of us will escape without some problems. This may seem like a case of crying wolf, but each of us has existing software that will be hampered by the ability of our computers to read or not read the year 2000 correctly. Most DOS programs and even Windows programs will not be compliant.

Those of you who are using the Windows 3.x operating system (remember it was the hot stuff before Windows 95) are not compliant. Not even Windows 95 is 100 percent compliant (See the Microsoft web site for more). So two of the most common operating systems on a home computer are not Y2K compliant. While the bugs in Windows 95 according to Microsoft are rather small and insignificant, the bugs are there. And as far as Windows 3.x goes ..... now is a good time to upgrade. And most of the old DOS programs that we use will have a problem with Y2K.

Not to speak of our computers. Everyone should check to see if their computer will handle this date transition. The standard PC computer system maintains two system dates; one is in the CMOS Real Time Clock chip - a hardware component that is normally on the machine's motherboard - and one is in the DOS (and Windows) operating system software. These two dates are represented differently. A serious problem was designed into the PC in 1984 (and into many applications since) and remains a problem today: Most computer systems will not gracefully enter the next century, only a few months away. The system date will probably be incorrect - without assistance, anyway - on 2000-01-02 or later because of a hardware design flaw. Similarly, many software applications will misbehave as the year 2000 is approached and passed, even if the system date is correct.

On many machines, even common desktop applications that get the date from the operating system will fail to receive the correct date unless the machine is corrected.

*A very large share of the PCs in service today will fail to advance the hardware date to year 2000 without assistance.*

Not to panic though, there are several small programs available for FREE that will load when the computer boots to correct these *hardware* problems and will help those machines that are still in service then. If you still have the old 386 or older (Gulp) you might be lucky and these might work. And most software vendors are supplying patches for their recent software to correct any Y2K problems. So crank up the old computer, log onto the Internet and start searching. There are multitudes of Y2K sites devoted to solutions and fixes, check out your software vendor to see if they have a site; if they do, guaranteed they will have a spot for Y2K patches and fixes. If not, better start saving to replace that piece of software or even some hardware with something that will be compliant. Better now than December 31, 1999.

## FINDING ELUSIVE FEMALE ANCESTORS

One great help in locating the name of a female ancestor is hidden in the land records. As a part of the dowry, when a daughter married, it was traditional for her father to either cover a loan or to carry the note for his new son-in-law.

The following formula may help in locating the maiden name of the wife. If you know the husband's name, find out who the loan payment was being made to. About 70% of the time it was to the wife's father. Also, in the lower left hand corner of most deeds are the signatures of from two to four witnesses. The first name is always on the husband's side, the next one is almost always from the wife's side. This signing arrangement was done to protect the wife's one-third dower right under the law.

Experts agree there is little else that is as conclusive as this arrangement to find clues to the wife's maiden name.



## VITAL RECORDS ON THE NET BECOMING MORE PREVALENT

Mesa County Clerk and Recorder Monika Todd announced recently that records relating to her office would be available online shortly. At this time the records available consist of 1997 and 1998 real estate transactions, recent subdivision plats, and 1997 and 1998 marriage records. More information will be added as quickly as possible. At some point all the county records, as far back as records were kept, will be available. The problem for genealogists is that there is a fee of \$100 to register as a user, plus a \$20 a month fee for copies. Mesa County Tax Records, however, can be researched free at <http://www.co.mesa.co.us>. There is no fee to make copies.

While this is new to Mesa County, the Michigan Division of Vital Records and Health Statistics now makes available an index to death records for all counties from 1867-1875.

These records cover about 81,540 persons and is expected to be expanded in the future. Check out <http://www.mdch.state.mi.us/PHA/OSR/gendis/index.htm>

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A searchable list of Immigration Lists compiled by the Canadian National Archive of miscellaneous records is now available at <http://www.ingeneas.com>

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What's the difference between ignorance and apathy?  
*I don't know, and I don't care!*

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Rachel Bliss, Dick & Gena King, Marie Kaczmarek, Marvel Storlie, Walt & Sissie Williams, all of Grand Junction.

## CIVILIANS ON U.S. ARMY POSTS DOCUMENTED

The *Prairieland Genealogical Society* reports that records of births, marriages and deaths of civilians at US army posts were recorded from 1884-1912. The information includes:

**Births:** baby name, sex, name, rank and military organization of father, mother's maiden name, number of children by marriage, and date/place of each birth.

**Marriages:** name, rank or occupation of husband, name, age and place of birth of wife, date and place of marriage.

**Death:** name of civilian who died, name and where appropriate, rank and organization of the husband or nearest relative, sex and age of civilian who died, date, place and cause of death.

This information can be obtained from Record Group 94 at the National Archives.

## MT. GARFIELD CHAPTER, NSDAR CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY

By Caroline Howard

The Mt. Garfield Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution celebrated its 90th birthday February 10, 1999 with a potluck luncheon and a recounting of accomplishments since its inception in 1909. The early annual luncheons were held at the La Court Hotel located where Two Rivers Convention Center stands now. The local chapter was organized in 1909 and received its charter in February 22, 1910. Charter membership closed in February 1911.

Charter members were:

Charlotte Augur BAYLIS, Alice Elizabeth Bittinger BUTHORN, Lois Strain CRAVEN, Wyche Delbridge DESCH, Samuela Foster DYKE, Hazel Butler GARMS, Martha Cushman HAMILTON, Minnie Kathrine HENDERSON, Claribel Alene Olds KROHN, Fannie Kent McCLINTOCK, Merle Miller McCLINTOCK, Narcissa Pillow Saunders Huston MARSHALL, Abby Hill MESERVE, Laura Crowe MOSLEY, Gertrude Perkins OHL, Emma Jerusha Chatfield PAGE, Josephine Rich PEARCE, Jessie Adelaide Morse PLUMB, Lola Frances Kennard PRICE, Hettie E. Vance BUNDLE, Carra McClure SCHAKELFORD, Clara Merrill Bateman SMITH, Helen



# MESA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 19

March, April, May, 1999

No. 1

## 1999 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership renewal is March 1st. Why not give a membership in the Mesa County Genealogical Society as a gift for a friend? Help make your Society a working instrument for yourself and others.

\_\_\_\_ \$10 Single    \_\_\_\_ \$12 Family

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ (Home) - (Work) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Surname List: \_\_\_\_\_

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Yes, I would like to help on the following committees; please call me:

\_\_\_\_ Program.    \_\_\_\_ Refreshment.    \_\_\_\_ Cemetery.    \_\_\_\_ Membership.    \_\_\_\_ Computer

\_\_\_\_ Newsletter.    \_\_\_\_ I would like to participate in the Mentor Program.    \_\_\_\_ I have suggestions for other things I would like to do; please call me.



## MESA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Volume 19

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No. 1

### 1999/2000 OFFICERS

President, Rick Sheldon  
Vice President, Joe Farrell  
Secretary, Catherine Lax,  
Treasurer, Mary Halsey  
Corr. Sec'y, Wynona Hennessey

### ELECTED OFFICERS

One Year - Wanda Dodson  
Two Year - Betty Jane Grosskopf  
Three Year - Dorothy O'Dwyer

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

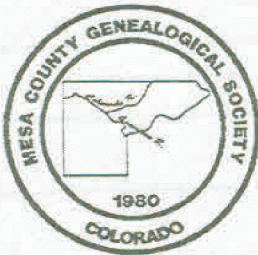
AGLL Librarian, Betty Jane Grosskopf,  
Historian, Jeanné Edwards,  
MCGS Librarian, Gloria Heitsman,  
Membership, Ron Knapp,  
Programs, Dennis Jenkins,  
Comp./Web Page Editor, Rick Sheldon,  
Newsletter Editor, Juanita Moston,

The Mesa County Genealogical Society was established in 1980 as a non-profit organization to promote an interest in genealogy. A Newsletter is published in March, June, September and December. Regular meetings are held at the Museum of Western Colorado, C. D. Smith Building, 5th. and Ute Ave., Grand Junction, CO at 7:00 p.m., on the second Thursday of each month. Visitors are welcome. Annual Dues: \$10 Singles; \$12 Family. Membership period is March 1st to April 30th. Those with UNPAID DUES (after April 30th.) will not receive the Newsletter. Send a SASE to receive a current membership card if you do not attend regular meetings.

Contributions, or written stories, requests, queries, or other information of importance are welcomed. Please direct your information to Editor Juanita Moston, Grand Junction, CO 81504-4219, or The Society reserves the right to edit or refuse submissions.

### REFRESHMENT CONTRIBUTORS

March: Gloria Heitsman, Wanda Dodson  
April: Rick Sheldon  
May: Liz Mustee, Pat Blackburn  
June: Jo Culberson, Mary Kronvall  
July:  
Aug: Picnic  
September: Judy Armstrong  
October: Laveta Kay  
November: Dorothy Roper, Karol Hoaglund  
December: Christmas party



Mesa County Genealogical Society  
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