

THE PIERRE-FT. PIERRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
Box 925, Pierre, SD 57501-0925

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Year 1992, Volume 17, Number 2

ISSN 0737-7975  
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OH, THE SHAMROCK.

Thro' Erin's Isle,  
To sport a while  
As Love and Valor wandered,  
With Wit, the sprite,  
Whose quiver bright  
A thousand arrows squandered.  
Wher'er they pass,  
A triple grass  
Shoots up, with dew-drops streaming.  
As softly green  
As emeralds seen  
Thro purest crystal gleaming.  
Oh the Shamrock, the green, immortal Shamrock!  
Chosen leaf,  
Of Bard and Chief,  
Old Erin's native shamrock!

----From Sir Thomas Moore, Irish Melodies,  
Little Leather Library, pp. 73-74.

Since our regular meeting night falls on St. Patrick's Day, perhaps you have a bit of Irish history, wit, or genealogy to share with us. Our meeting will start at 7:30 pm and will be a work session. We will take inventory of our projects and determine what our next steps will be. Some of the topics that will be reviewed will be the cemetery project, the proposed revisions of the by-laws, possible programs for the coming year, and plans for sponsoring a genealogy workshop. The executive board will meet at 7:00. All of this happens March 17 at the Rawlins Library.

LOOKING AHEAD

The April meeting will be April 21. At that time Linda Summer, South Dakota State Archivist, will present the program on "Preservation of Photographs. Bring questions about saving or using photographs in your family history album or salvaging problem photographs that you find in your genealogical research. Linda may have an answer for you. The regular meeting will start at 7:30 pm at the Rawlins Library, with the executive board meeting at 7:00 pm.

THANK YOU

Thanks to ND REC/RTC MAGAZINE, The Bismarck-Mandan Historical and Genealogical Society, and Jo Ann Winistorfer for permission to use the following article.



# North Dakota scene of Hallinglag

*The following article first appeared in the "Prairie Patchwork" column of the North Dakota REC/RTC Magazine. It is being reprinted here with permission of the author and publisher.*

by Jo Ann Winistorfer

As an avid genealogist with Norwegian roots, I'd been a member of the Hallinglag for several years. My grandmother was a Halling—born in Gol, a town in Hallingdal, Buskerud County (or fylke), Norway. She emigrated to America when she was about 10.

Now I was attending my first meeting—or "stevne"—for the organization made up of those whose roots go back to the once isolated, mountain-rimmed Hallingdal valley in central Norway. The meeting was held at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks in mid-June of 1991.

North Dakota, I learned, is frequently the host state for annual bygdelag meetings such as my Hallinglag; this was, in fact, the 13th time the Hallinglag had met in Grand Forks. (Another lag—Solor—held its stevne in Fargo in mid-September. And the northwest chapter of yet another lag—Gudbrandsdal—met in Bottineau in late June.) "Bygdelags," or "lags," are organizations of descendants from particular areas (often, valleys) of Norway.

Most lag members now live in North America, but some still reside in the original valleys or districts of Norway for which the lags are named. There are about 30 active lags (two were just formed in the past two years) that hold regular meetings in the United States—most frequently in the north-central states where most Norwegians settled. A few lags band together to hold their annual stevne. A National Council of Bygdelags, or "Bygdelagenes Fellesraad," headquartered in Minneapolis, coordinates things between lags.

## Born in North Dakota

Halling roots run deep in North Dakota, with a goodly share of them numbered among the original homesteaders into the Red River Valley. Many moved there from springboard settlements in Wisconsin, Iowa or Minnesota; others came directly from Norway. Halling offspring still flourish

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*Mountain ranges insulated communities within Norway from each other and encouraged the development of cultures unique to each valley.*

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across the state—especially around such towns as Northwood and Hatton, located just south of Grand Forks. Many others stayed in their original communities and states or moved on to Canada or the West Coast.

All groups—including a handful who still live in Hallingdal—were represented at the Hallinglag. In all, more than 200 people attended the four-day event this year. While a few attendees were from North Dakota, other U.S. visitors ranged from states as far away as Washington, Colorado, New York and Pennsylvania.

The Hallinglag itself was born in North Dakota—at Walcott, in 1907—84 years ago. The first bygdelag in America—the Valdres Samband—had been founded eight years earlier, by emigrants from the Valdres valley just east of Hallingdal, who wished to keep in touch with their heritage. (I'm also a member of that bygdelag.)

You might wonder why each local district formed its own separate lag, rather than combining into one big one. In Norway, these areas were often separated by vast mountain ranges, keeping communities between the mountains insulated from outside influences. Thus unique cultures developed in each valley, with costumes and dialects differing from those of even their nearest neighbors on the map of Norway.

## From bunads to baubles

I was surprised to learn that the women's dress costumes—or bunads—were not only unique to each valley (the Hallingdal costume is a black, chemise-style jumper with colorful embroidery at the bib and

hem, worn over a long-sleeved blouse), but that each little community within Hallingdal had its own version.

"They're like license plates," says Gladys Peiler of Leeds, N.D., long-time Halling member and former lag secretary, whose ancestors came from Gol. "If they see my bunad, they can tell I'm from Gol," she says. "Everything on that dress sign something." Even the embroidery on blouse varies from community to community, according to Gladys.

The Gol costume is among the most colorful of the Hallingdal bunads, thanks to a bright, flowery apron. Most other areas within Hallingdal have costumes with brocade aprons. Besides the dress bunads, women wore everyday bunads which "were not so colorful," Gladys adds.

Matching caps, embroidered with bright flowers, also signal what specific community the wearer is from. The Gol cap, Gladys says, features a bright red ribbon that runs under the chin. "One lady cut the ribbon and I said, 'You just ruined your authentic outfit,'" she says.

Gladys, who's been to Norway five times, had her costume handcrafted in Norway. "I had to wait a year for it, and at the time it cost \$400," she says. Today her outfit is valued at \$2,200.

Such costumes are apt to get more worn here in the United States, according to Gladys—who's also a Sorlandet Norway member. "Here, we wear them at our monthly Sons of Norway meetings, at bake sales, mixed chorus and other affairs," she says. "In Norway, they're worn only for Syttende Mai (17th of May, Norwegian independence day) and for baptism confirmations and weddings."

To my delight, many of the women attending the Hallinglag (including Gladys) wore the appropriate costume for their community—clothing that in many cases had been handed down through generations of mothers and daughters. Gladys someday she'll be passing her bunad to her granddaughter who has already asked

Adding the finishing touch to the bunad, bodices and to earlobes was "solje," a Norwegian silver adorning brooches, chains and earrings—much in evidence at the stevne.

In contrast to their richly decked women, the men wore plain black suits featuring short jackets with metal buttons. Their pants, bloused at the knees, were a



# annual 'stevne'

style in Hallingdal—but I only noticed one man wearing them during the stevne. (In Old Norway, however, men's dress uniforms featured red vests under white jackets—worn above gaily embroidered black knee pants.)

## Norwegian spoken here

One didn't have to be a linguist to pick up lilted traces of Norwegian accents—or even to hear Norwegian spoken fluently among many of the lag attendees. A guest from Norway brought a message from the people of Hallingdal, and I was surprised to hear him pronounce "Hallingdal" more like "Harringdar."

Pronouncing some "t's" like "r's" seems to be a characteristic of the Halling dialect, according to Orville Bakken, a retired farmer from Northwood, who has roots in Hol, Hallingdal. Bakken explains that he once tried to translate the word "kensel" in an old letter written in Norwegian and pigen English by an emigrant from Hallingdal to relatives in the Old Country. Taking the Halling pronunciation into account, Bakken soon came up with the correct translation: cancer.

Bakken was one of 13 Hallinglag members receiving certificates (in person or by mail) honoring them for being 80 or more years young. Bakken also received a plaque for his work in indexing and publishing all the names found in back *Hallingen* publications—a tool for those tracing Halling roots. To date, 315 issues of the *Hallingen*, the lag's information-packed quarterly magazine, have been published—the earlier issues in Norwegian and more recent issues mostly in English.

Along with Norwegian accents, Norwegian phrases being cast about and some conversations in Norwegian came Norwegian table grace and sing-alongs featuring Norwegian songs. In addition, children and grandchildren of some of the Hallinglag members demonstrated their prowess at Norwegian, learned at a language camp they had attended in Bemidji, Minn., prior to the stevne.

## Lots of kin

My original purpose for joining the lag was genealogy. And indeed, the Hallinglag is a mecca for anyone looking for Halling roots.

Becoming a member of a bygdelag dealing with the specific area where your ances-

tors once lived means you have access to help from others researching the same area, and to sources dealing strictly with that area. It means the appointed genealogist for the lag can help you with your research. It means any queries you may run in the official lag publication—in this case the *Hallingen*—will be read by people familiar with the area you're searching and

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*It was fun to find out that many of us shared lines leading to the Gulsvik farm in Fla, a 'garden of Eden' for Hallings...*

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perhaps even by people related to you.

I had already learned—by answering queries in the *Hallingen* and through correspondence—that I had a few "relatives" among the group who had many of the same ancestral lines I had. A trip to the Hallinglag's genealogy room soon confirmed that I had more kinfolk than I thought I had.

Others tracing their roots brought their pedigree charts and other family history material with them, so it was easy for all of us to compare ancestors—as well as confirm information already collected.

It was fun to find out that many of us shared lines leading to the Gulsvik farm in Fla, a "garden of Eden" for Hallings—then stretching all the way back in time to 65 B.C. Included in those lines were Harald Fairhair, the king who united Norway; numerous Vikings, and the Yngling dynasty of Sweden.

Edna Rude of Gary, Minn., assisted by Kay Buckingham, Louisville, Ky., was there to answer genealogy questions. Spread out on numerous tables were such resources as family history books on Hallingdal families; bygdeboks for Hallingdal communities; indexes of Hallingdal emigrant names and their dates of departure, and microfilms of Hallingdal parish records and censuses. Microfilm readers and a copy machine were also available for anyone needing them.

Perhaps most helpful for researchers were the bygdeboks. These thick volumes are packed with histories and genealogies of individual farm owners and tenants, a few dating back to around 1400, on up to the present. The community of Gol, for

example, has published five such books, with a sixth one scheduled for publication at any time.

Norwegian names often yield clues for finding the farm one's forebears came from in Norway. Often, emigrants took the farm name (or an anglicized version of it) for their surname. At the Hallinglag, for example, name tags bearing surnames such as Tufte, Kolsrud and Mehus/Medhus pointed to the Tufte farm in Ustedal; the Kolsrud farm in Fla, and the Medhus farm in Hol, all in Hallingdal.

## Some unexpected rewards

Side benefits of studying your family history are many, according to Edna Rude. "You learn history, you learn geography, you learn to read maps," she says. "You learn names, and you learn the meaning of names. And, many of the younger generation are learning Norwegian."

A concern has been that, as fewer in the younger generation can claim they're a good part Halling but are instead—much like my children—combinations such as 1/4 German, 1/8 Dutch, 1/8 Swiss, 1/8 French and 3/8 Norwegian, with 1/8th of that being Halling—they'll have less interest in joining bygdelags such as the Hallinglag.

Yet growing interest in genealogy has drawn new members like myself, who are only part Halling but who want to experience their unique Hallingdal heritage. Hallinglag membership has "grown considerably as the younger generation wants to know their family background," according to Bill Bekkestad of Fergus Falls, Minn., outgoing vice president and lag historian.

The 84th annual Hallinglag began with the blowing of the lur, an ancient Norwegian horn about 6 feet long, and speeches by the mayor of Grand Forks and by Dr. Thomas Clifford, president of the University of North Dakota. It culminated in a Saturday evening banquet, with entertainment provided by a Norwegian folk singer. In between, there were tours, talks and plenty of food, culture and camaraderie. The kinship I sensed with those I met was an added bonus.

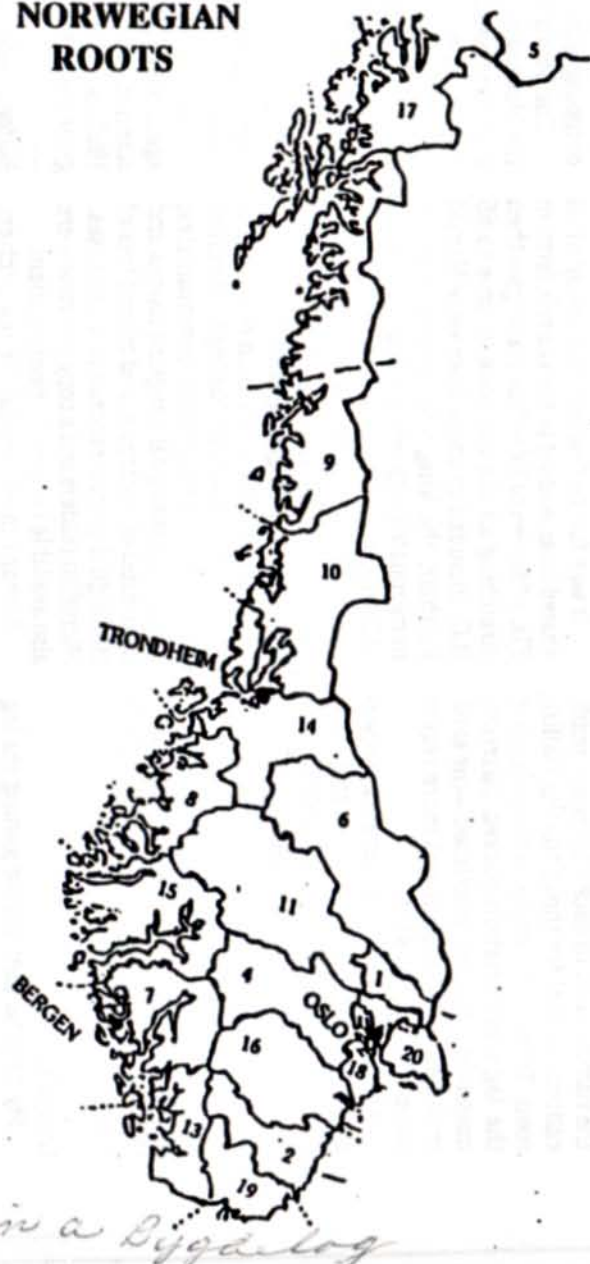
In short, I plan to attend the Hallinglag again next year! And best of all, I understand it will be held in North Dakota in 1992. So I won't have far to go to have a great time. □

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*Editor's note: The 1992 Hallinglag stevne is scheduled to take place at the State College of Science in Wahpeton, N.D., on June 18-21. For more on bygdelags, turn the page.*



## EXPLORE YOUR NORWEGIAN ROOTS



### MAP CODE BY COUNTY (FYLKE) AND BYDELAG

- (1) AKERSHUS  
Romsås
- (2) AUST-AGDER  
Sørøst
- (3) BERGEN, city of  
Nordstrand
- (4) BUSKERUD  
Hillingdal  
Næmde  
Risør-Medun-Eller  
Sigdal
- (5) FROGMARE  
Nordland
- (6) HEDMARK  
Soler
- (7) NORDALAND  
Herdanger  
Nordstrand  
Sørstrand  
Voss
- (8) MØRE OG Romsdal  
Møre og Romsdal
- (9) NORDLAND  
Nordland
- (10) NORD-TRONDLAG  
Trøndelag
- (11) OPPLAND  
Gudbrandsdal-National  
Gudbrandsdal-NW  
Hedland  
Lund  
Mjøsen-Oppland  
Tron  
Valdres
- (12) OSLO, city of  
Romsås
- (13) ROGALAND  
Rogaland
- (14) SØR-TRONDLAG  
Trøndelag
- (15) SOGN OG FJORDANE  
Nordfjord  
Nordfjord-Vissnes  
Sogn  
Sognfjord  
Sunnfjord
- (16) TELEMARK  
Tvedestrand
- (17) TROMS  
Nordland
- (18) VESTFOLD  
Tvedestrand
- (19) VEST-AGDER  
Agder
- (20) ØSTFOLD

### Bygdslag Build Pride in Heritage

The Norwegian-American "bygdslag" is an organization of emigrant descendants from a particular area of Norway, now living in North America. Every "lag" seeks to preserve and strengthen bonds with its community-of-origin in Norway.

Annual bygdslag gatherings ("stevner") are usually held in the summer. Publications or newsletters help people keep in touch during the rest of the year.

Demonstrations or displays of Norwegian arts and crafts, along with the selection of banquet foods, books & readings, choral & instrumental music, fiddlers & folk dancing, films, genealogy workshops, noted speakers and "visiting" are likely to be included in a stevne program.

Fun, fellowship, and occasional tours to Norway are possible. Also help in tracing your ancestry to re-establish contact with relatives may be available.

"Bygdslagenes Fellesraad", the national bygdslag council, sponsors this brochure to assist you in getting further information. Write or call your bygdslag contact person or genealogist.

### Bygdslagenes Fellesraad Officers

- PRES** Marilyn Somdahl, 612-831-4409  
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C = Contact Person  
G = Genealogist



PIERRE - FT. PIERRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY.....  
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PIERRE - FT. PIERRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY 1977 - 1980

Continuing with a review of the history of the the Pierre - Ft. Pierre Genealogical Society, there were a number of firsts. The Everton workshop was held in Aberdeen on September 1, 1977. Jane Bramwell and Pat Collins attended. A major fund raising project was initiated to help the Rawlins library purchase a microfilm reader. A technical services committee was formed to take care of the collection. Genny Ziegler, Joanne Fix, Nancy Lowe, Creta Moe and Edna Cooper volunteered to serve on the committee.

The first honorary and life membership was presented to Dayton Canady on June 13, 1979. The first surname index of the Pierre-Ft. Pierre Genealogical Society was published in the fall of 1979.

During this time, the State Historical Society published a newsletter for genealogical societies. This was called the GENE - O- LOG and lasted about a year, but contained a list of Indian Census records, marriage records of Hughes County from 1887 - 1899 and the 1880 Census of Sanborn County, Dakota Territory.

It was during 1976 that the Society incorporated as a non-profit organization. Following that time, several donations to the research collection were made by the members. In 1978 members drew up an agreement on the use of the collection, its storage and disposition should the society disband.

Some of the programs held by the local society included Pastor Dan Nelson on research in Norway, Rev. Father Flannery of SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Church on using Catholic records, Frank Hall on records kept by funeral homes and John Hines on preserving old photographs. Notes from the program indicated that the Catholic Church records are kept in local churches but a microfilm copy is stored in Sioux Falls. The earliest Pierre records are from the 1880's.

During 1980 excerpts from the diary of Edmund and Ada Cooper were included and gave an insight into their life. He owned a drug and grocery store in Michigan.

Members also learned how to use the court records at the Supreme Court Law Library.

Officers during the next few years were the following:

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE- PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER
1978	Stephen Miller	Edna Cooper	Floramay Miller	Denise Smith
	Exec. Board Members	Creta Moe	Nancy Lowe	
1979	Edna Cooper	Paula Honerkamp	Starlene Mitchell	Denise Smith
	Exec. Board Members	Nancy Lowe	Gayle Van Camp	
1980	Edna Cooper	Paula Honerkamp	Joanne Fix	Genny Ziegler
	Executive Board Members	Nancy Lowe	Gayle Van Camp	

A Rapid City seminar in 1979 brought members useful information on using the Nebraska archives. Items covered included land records for early settlers, census, atlases, immigration records, newspapers and county records. Also in 1979 work was begun on sorting the WPA cemetery records and veterans records.

During the Pierre Centennial year, 1980-81, the Pierre -Ft. Pierre Genealogical Society awarded certificates to individuals who proved to be descendants of settlers in the area during the years 1880-85. Lois Flick served as chairman of the committee concerned with certificates.

"This is LEAP YEAR and we have leaped into getting our old projects finished and new ones started. The microfilm reader has been purchased. The cemetery records have been sorted through Lake County. We are working on a State Society, and we have undertaken a project for the Pierre Centennial. It looks like a GREAT year."

Pierre - Ft. Pierre Genealogical Society  
 1980, Vol. 5, No. 1 , p. 1.

This is LEAP YEAR - 1992, and I hope that history will record this as being a GREAT year for us as well. The review of society activities will continue in the next newsletter.

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#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected officers at the February meeting: Ardis Ruark, President; Bev Huckins, Vice-President; Secretary, Virginia Hanson; Treasurer, Chris Dierks; and Executive Board Member, Steve Gomez.



### ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the State Genealogical Society will be held the first weekend in May at the Ramkota Inn in Pierre, South Dakota. Meetings of most interest to the Genealogical Society are on Saturday, May 2. The Board meeting is from 12:30 -2:00 pm. There will be two sessions on "Getting the Most Out Of South Dakota Research." The first session runs from 2 - 3 pm and the second from 3:30 -4:30 pm.

### OTHER EVENTS

April 11, 1992 -- Aberdeen Area Genealogical Society  
Annual Workshop --1:30 -4:00 pm at the Family History  
Center, Fairgrounds Road, Aberdeen, SD. Contact:  
Florence Krueger, RR2, Box 80, Mina, SD 57462 for  
more information.

April 29-May 2, 1992 - 1992 National Genealogical Society  
Conference in the States: A New Voyage of Discovery -  
Jacksonville, Florida, contact 1992 NGS Conference,  
4527 17th Street, North, Arlington, VA 22207-2399.

### ADDRESS CHANGE

Minnesota Genealogical Society moved to 1650 Carroll Ave.,  
St. Paul, MN. Their mailing address is still P. O. Box 16069,  
St. Paul, MN 55116-0069. The phone number is (612)222-6929.

### THANKS

A big thank you to Col. Steve Gomez for showing us  
the National Guard resources in January and to Michael Miller  
for talking to the society in February about South Dakota folk  
art.

Pierre - Ft. Pierre  
Genealogical Society  
P. O. Box 925  
Pierre, SD 57501



THE PIERRE - FT. PIERRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
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" 'And the rains came' is the best description of this spring in South Dakota. ...The Executive Board has been holding discussions about revising the by-laws." Sound familiar? Not only did it happen in 1992 it happened in 1984. This issue will continue with a summary of our twenty year history. But first a look at what's ahead for the Pierre - Ft. Pierre Genealogy Members.

COMING UP

Our next meeting is one that we have all been looking forward to. We have heard that many exciting things can happen when you try it! And soon we'll be able to do it! The July 21st meeting will be at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at the Family History Center at 7:30 pm. At that time Laura Glum will help us "Find our Family on the Computer." The Executive Board will meet at 7:00pm.

The August 18th meeting will also be at the Family History Center. The program will be "How To Enter Your Family onto the Computer" and will start at 7:30 pm. The Executive Board will meet at 7:00 pm.

Researching Colonial New England tips will be given by Ginny Ziegler at the September 15 meeting at the Rawlins Library. Regular meeting time is 7:00pm for the Board and 7:30 pm for the program.

Our genealogy workshop is set for October. The sessions will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and will be held on Thursday evenings from 7-9pm. The content of the workshop will be determined by the participants and their need and interests. The tentative schedule is as follows:

October 1	Beginning Family Research Making charts
October 8	Family Sources
October 15	Community Resources
October 22	Community Resources
October 31	Cultural Heritage Center Resources

The session at the Cultural Heritage Center will be from 2:30 to 4:30 pm. Please advise ahead of the session if a participant is handicapped so arrangements can be made for full participation.



PIERRE - FT. PIERRE SOCIETY

Officers serving from 1984-1986

YEAR	PRESIDENT	V. PRESIDENT	SECRETARY
1984	Richard Phillips	Marlynrae Mathews	Floramay Miller
	TREASURER	Ruby Gray	
	Exec. Board Joanne Fix, Laura Glum,, Stephen Miller		
1985	PRESIDENT	V. PRESIDENT	SECRETARY
	Richard Phillips	Stan Oestreich	Floramay Miller
	TREASURER	Ruby Gray	
	Exec. Board Marlynrae Mathews, Joanne Fix, Stephen Miller		
1986	PRESIDENT	V. PRESIDENT	SECRETARY
	Stan Oestreich	Laura Glum	June Oestreich
	TREASURER	Richard Phillips	
	Executive Board Alice Smith, Marlynrae Mathews		

In 1983 the Scotty Phillips Cemetery book was completed and sold for \$3.00. The 1984 Newsletter contained a journal By Irene B. Thompson of Clarington, Ohio who with her sister, Clara, and brother-in-law Thurman Blattler drove from their home to the World's Fair in Chicago, then west to Oregon, down the coast to California and back to Ohio. The prices of the 1930's remind one of simpler times. Other reminiscences included those of Neva May Reed McBride's childhood. She was the mother of Floramay Miller. Floramay also contributed a story "In Search of an Orphan", the story of her husband's grandfather, Frank Benjamin Miller. In 1986 Starlene Mitchell shared the life story of her great grandfather George Harding.

In 1986 the Society worked with the Pierre Historical Society to inventory the records available at the Hughes County Court House. Some of the information found included registration of threshing machines, eligible men for South Dakota's militia, burial expenses for South Dakota Civil War Veterans of the Union Army veterans, applications for WPA employment and records for the defunct office of the County Superintendent of Schools.

Cedar Hill cemetery was read and work begun on Riverside cemetery records. Churches were organizing and indexing records. Edna Cooper reported Congregational United Church of Christ records were located at Yankton College.



# A Sketch of the Life and War Record of R. S. FORTSON

---

In obedience to the request of T. F. Harwell, Adgt. Camp Ben McCulloch, I will proceed to give a short sketch of my life and war record during the Civil War with the states.

I was born in the State of Mississippi on the 3rd day of January, 1837, in the county of Leake, about ten miles east of the town of Carthage, and when I was about nine years old my father moved to Louisiana, near the town of Mansfield. There is where I called home until the war began in 1861. My life from the time I was 17 or 18 years old was a roving life until the war came up. I went to the war in the Spring of 1861 from Mansfield, Louisiana, with a company called the Desoto Blues, and we went to Camp Moore which was located on the New Orleans & Great Northern R. R. a few miles North of New Orleans and there I was mustered into service and assigned to Co. F. 9th La. Regt. (vol.) and in a few days sent to Virginia Army and landed at Manassas Junction during the battle of Manassas and Bull Run: I will say here that the Comander of my regiment at the time was Dick Taylor, son of General Zachary Taylor. My memory don't serve me well enough to give you the name of Division Commander except that I was in the commar i commanded by Stonewall Jackson (Gen. T. J. Jackson). I was not either wounded or captured during the war. I was four years in said war serving about two and a half years in Virginia and the remainder of the four in Texas. I was never mustered out, was at home on furlough when the war closed. Well I won't undertake to tell where my life has been spent except since the Civil War closed.

When the war closed I had a wife and baby in Navarro County, Texas, but we soon moved back to Louisiana, and lived there about five years and then moved back to Texas landing in Va Zandt County, where we lived a few months and we moved to Northwest Arkansas (we were traveling for my health) then in the opening of Spring we moved back to Louisiana, P. O. Address was Sparty. I remained in Louisiana about four years and moved back to Texas stopping at or near San Marcos where I remained 27 years. Thence at San Antonio three years and then to Austin about two years and then to Sabinal, Texas.

My life has been spent a great deal on the wing—sometimes in the school room teaching the young, and sometimes using the Jack plane—and sometimes teaching the fair daughters how to paint, and when I was dead broke a few times I took hold of the plow handles—however, a part of the above applies to my life before the war. Excuse me for getting the cart before the horse.

My business has been since the war, farming and office work principally. I farmed in Hays County about five years before I went into office. The people elected me to the Assessor's office in Hays County in 1880. God bless them! I love the people of Hays County yet. I held that office for ten years, after that was Deputy County Clerk for nine years.



Yes, I am a member of a church. I joined the Baptist Church in 1869. Hence I have been a member of the Church about 47 years—and a Deacon about 42 years. I joined the church at Lake Bisteno, La.

I do not belong to any Fraternal orders. I will name a few of the battles I was in: Manassas Junction, Front Royal, Strawsburg, Winchester, Harper's Ferry, First Battle of Fredericksburg, Cross Keys and Port Republic.

There were many other skirmishes but would not be called battles proper. I was often away from my command on detail when battles were fought.

I will now relate some striking incidents of the war: One time I was ill and with a few other sick soldiers, was ordered to cross the river from the north side to the side on which Port Republic was situated and to go in the direction of the baggage train. We crossed the river a little above the bridge in a small boat—after which most of the men went toward the baggage train while I and a comrade by the name of Jones a member of the same company, went to the Pike to find better walking, as the Pike was nicely macademized, and as we walked up on the Pike and looked to our left we saw several Yankee gunners with a cannon pointing through the Bridge (the Bridge was a covered one) which spanned the Shenandoah River at that place. We were about one hundred or more yards from them and about that time we saw Stonewall Jackson come down the Pike as fast as his horse could run. He had on his old brown cap but wore a U. S. overcoat and rode by us passing about ten feet of us in the direction of the gun. I heard him say: "Who ordered that gun there? move it down there, don't you see the enemy down yonder?" pointing to our troops on the north side of the river, and also pointing to a level place a few feet below the bridge and a short distance from the mouth of the bridge. The Yankees at once moved the cannon to the place indicated by General Jackson, who immediately rode through the bridge as fast as his horse could carry him and waved his old cap to his men as soon as he got to where they could see him, who began a double quick firing as they went toward the bridge, and soon drove the gun and Yankee soldiers away from the bridge and then marched his army through the bridge. I knew General Jackson by sight and can't be mistaken.

And one other incident happened the second year of the war, during the time Dick Taylor commanded our regiment. While our regiment camped on the Ocoquan river in the Spring of 1862, the Government at Richmond sent a Virginia Lieutenant to our command—we being opposite to where a man lived who was in the enemy's lines and was giving the Government trouble as a spy, etc., in the interest of the Yankees, his residence was about 300 yards from the Yankee camp and about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile from the line between the two armies. The Lieutenant wanted our Colonel to furnish two men and he had two men. As I was First Seargent of Gompany F, the Colonel sent for me and asked me who he could trust to go and not be captured. I told him I would not recommend anybody, but we had brave enough men, lots of them, but I would not risk as to caution any of them, except myself. So the Colonel told me to pick a man to go with me and go with the Lieutenant. So we crossed the river about 12 o'clock at night in a boat



and landed in the mouth of a ravine and proceeded up the ravine going in the direction of the man's house, and there were thick bushes all the way up the ravine and at the end where the ravine stopped, it was about 200 yards from the man's house and in the open field. We ran into the house, got our prisoner and got back across the river before the Yankees got in shooting distance of us. Our prisoner was sent to Richmond and I learned he stayed there until the war ended. The man's name was Underwood.

I got no transfer from the Virginia Army, but was ordered to join some command west of the Mississippi River as it was dangerous to cross the Mississippi River as the Yankees had possession of same. I was very glad I could not go back for I had married me a wife and wanted to stay close to home. You know how that is I suppose, you all have been there.

You will see, counting from my birth on the 3rd day of January, 1837, to the 3rd day of January, 1917, is 80 years, so that gives you my age.

I have a good mind to give you another incident of my life which happened during the war. I guess you all have done things when young you wished you had not done since you have gotten old. This same comrade of mine that went into the Yankee lines with me and others to arrest the man, came to me one night about 12 m. and told me he knew where there was some apple brandy, but it was inside the Yankee lines and described the place to me, and I told him I would go with him and get some of it. So we let out and got through our lines by bribing our Sentinels and got through the Yankee lines by crawling under a bridge, and then we went straight to the man's house and he let us in. It was after midnight but his wife and daughters got us a fine supper, and the old man filled the six canteens full of apple brandy. Of course he did not charge us anything for it. But we did not have to steal our way back as the Yankee Army had moved when we went back. The fellow's name that went with me was John Rains.

Well, I imagine I hear some one say that Fortson had done very well if he had just left that apple brandy business off, but I have always heard that an honest confession is good for the soul. I have long since made all those confessions to my God. And as I will soon leave this mortal body I want to say to all my old comrades I have a warm spot in my heart for them all, and hope I will meet them in that home above where there will be no more din of battle but PEACE—PEACE—PEACE—forever, where we can be with our blessed God and Master forever: and forever.

Respectfully submitted,

R. S. FORTSON,

Company F, 9th La. Reg't. (Vol.)

Sabinal, Texas, Dec. 1, 1916.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT

There is one other incident. While Jackson's Army occupied the Valley of Virginia he was often ordered to reinforce some other command hence he would leave the Valley for a short time and then he would have to whip the Yankees back again. At one of the times marching up the valley going south, I gave completely



out and was left to the mercy of the Yankees and not knowing what else to do, I left the road and went up on the side of the mountain and when I struck a small trail I would go a few feet and rest. I suppose I had gotten about a mile from the road when I heard horses coming. I then crawled to the side in the bushes and the Yankees stopped about opposite me and one of them said: "There are no rebels up here", so they turned and went back. I then got back to the trail and proceeded to find out where it led to and went on until I got on top of the mountain and looked down on the other side and saw a light (for this was in the night) and I went about a half mile further on top of the mountain and came into a much traveled road and I took the right hand end of it and that road led me to the house where I had seen the light and I hollered and was admitted into the house. I suppose it was then about two o'clock a. m. The lady and daughters however would have to take something to eat before I went to bed and the old man of the house made me a long toddy and then I went to bed and slept until nine o'clock next morning. I kept close for a few days and begun to get strong again. The girls would often go walking with me to the different houses in the valley. There were about ten or twelve farms in the little valley. The valley went by the name of the Devil's Hole. There were no men except old ones in the valley. They were all gone to the war. This was in ripe cherry time and the trees were very tall and you had to climb to get the cherries—and of course, I being a sick man I could not climb and was advised to lay down on the grass and the girls did the climbing and I lay on the grass and ate cherries. Well, if you want any more of the foregoing report, you will have to read between the lines. I soon found conveyance after that back to my command without having to steal through the Yankee lines.

And one other incident. In marching one night across the Blue Ridge Mountain, I was taken sick and I could not march any further. So I sent for my captain and told him I could not go any further and he told me to drop out and go into that house over there that was near the road. So I dropped out of ranks and concluded I would sit down by the fence near the gate and rest a while and when I did that I was soon asleep and did not know anything until next day about ten o'clock when I was aroused by an old gray headed doctor, he trying to give me some medicine. So I took the medicine and then I wanted to know how I come there and the girl blushed and went out. The old lady told me that her daughter went to the front door and hollered back to her that there was another dead man out there and she told her to go out there and see and she told her that he was not quite dead but was in a bad fix so the old lady and her daughter brought me in the house and washed me and put on dry clothes. I had been in a slow drizzle rain all night and she told me that her son that was in the army had plenty of clothing there and I was welcome to them. And she said that "this old man is our family doctor and he is willing to do all he can for you". I say, "yes but I have no money", and the good lady said, "it would not cost you a cent, either, for your board or attention", and the old doctor said, "what I do for you, will not cost you or the government anything." And then I felt easy and stayed there about ten days and got to my command just as they were going into the first Battle of Fredericksburg.

R. S. FORTSON.



Our thanks to Tom Feigum for presenting the June program on funeral records and historical homes and business in Pierre. The slide show created an awareness of how many places are of historic value and our need to help preserve them.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE ILLUMINATOR, the Zion (IL)Genealogical Society Newsletter reports that birth certificates are becoming difficult for genealogists to obtain. At the present time, birth certificates are considered protected documents. A person may obtain his or her own birth record or their child's by applying to the county clerk or State Registrar of Vital Records. A court order is needed to find the records of a deceased grandparent or other relative. A court order to open the records is estimated to cost \$300. This expense puts up a wall for those doing family history research. Penalty for obtaining birth records illegally was upgraded to a class 4 felony in 1988 resulting in a prison term of 3 years. Let's hope genealogists can influence a change in this situation.

....Illuminator, Vol. 8, p.4

The Family Records Today, Journal of American Family Records for July has articles on researching Italy and Ireland. It also has a list of local resources for research in Utah.

The Anoka County Genealogical Society Newsletter lists Midwest Major religious archives, as taken from The Genealogical Helper, Nov/Dec 1991, pages 10-13. CATHOLIC, ST. Paul Seminary, Ireland Library, St. Paul, MN 55105; St. Francis Seminary Library, 3257 S. Lake Drive, Milwaukee, WI 53207; LUTHERAN, St. Olaf College, Rolvaag Library, Northfield, MN 55057; Gustavus Adolphus College, Benadotte Library, ST. Peter, MN 56082; Augustana College, Mikkelsen Library, Sioux Falls, SD 57197; and Concordia College, Ylvisaker Library, Moorhead, MN 56560.

The Dakota Homestead announces that they will hold their genealogical workshop on October 10, 1992. Scheduled on the program is Marit Lucy on beginning Scandinavian research, bygdeboks, bygdelags and what is new at the LDS library. Barry Kirk, also from Salt Lake, will be speaking on Canadian, Ukrainian, Dutch and French research. Local people will speak on computers, Germans from Russia and more. This will be at the LDS church in Bismarck.

BYU Genealogy and Family History Seminar is scheduled for August 5-8, 1992.



Virginia Hanson contributed the "Sketch of the Life and War Record of R. S. Fortson. The article was written approximately 1917. R. S. Fortson was the Great-great grandfather of Virginia. Robert Sylvanus Fortson died August 9, 1921 at the home of his daughter Mrs. Mae Groos, in Sabinal, Kansas and was laid to rest at 4:00 pm the same day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Beginning with this issue the newsletter will move to a quarterly publication date. Our next issue will be out in October and contain information regarding meetings, people and places. Please send contributions to Ardis Ruark, P. O. Box 925, Pierre, SD 57501.

\* \* \* \* \*

The South Dakota Genealogical Society will hold its fall meeting in Brookings on September 26, 1992. Marilyn Heesch is in charge of arrangements.

Pierre - Ft. Pierre  
Genealogical Society  
P. O. Box 925  
Pierre, SD 57501





THE PIERRE - FT. PIERRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
Box 925, Pierre, SD 57501-0925

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### WORKSHOPS

The Genealogy workshops sponsored by the Pierre-Ft. Pierre Genealogy society have proved most interesting to beginning and experienced researchers of family history. The first session was spent talking about beginning the family search, making charts, and recording the information. Our second session was devoted to locating family sources that were available within our own homes. A guest speaker David Rave, from the Alexander Mitchell Public Library in Aberdeen, talked about the American Family Records Association (AFRA) circulating collection that is available in the library, the railroad collection and the obituary file.

From these two sessions we have gained two new members. We are happy to welcome Bob and Thelma TRAVIS, P. O. Box 201, Pierre, SD 57501 as new members. We hope that others who have been participating in the sessions will join our group.

The October 15 and 22 sessions will be held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from 7 - 9 pm. Because of the workshops, the regularly scheduled meeting on the third Tuesday has been canceled. The Board will meet at 6:30 pm on October 22.

The final session for the workshops is scheduled on October 31 from 2:30 - 4:30 pm at the Cultural Heritage Center. Please advise ahead of the session if a participant is handicapped so arrangements can be made for full participation.

### NOVEMBER MEETING

Recently Mr. Godfrey Roberts made available a number of early editions of a Pierre newspaper. We will hold our November 17 meeting at the United Church of Christ, located at the corner of Prospect and Highland at 7:30 pm to examine these papers and determine what steps need to be taken to make the information available to local genealogists. These papers date from 1912. Please enter the church from the door on the Prospect side.



ANNIVERSARY YEAR DRAWS TO A CLOSE

As the twentieth anniversary year draws to a close, it has been a busy year for the members. It has given us a chance to review the society's history and evaluate the efforts made by previous members. We have also had time to review the direction that the current members want to take. We are indebted to many members who contributed materials to the library and took time to organize it, developed publications, helped many family researchers along the way to a lifetime hobby, and helped us develop many new friendships not only at a local level but across the state.

- |      |  |                            |
|------|--|----------------------------|
| 1987 | President Stan Oestreich   | Vice-President Laura Glum  |
|      | Secretary June Oestreich   | Treasurer Richard Phillips |
| 1988 | President Joanne Fix   | Vice-President Edna Cooper |
|      | Secretary Chris Dierks   | Treasurer June Oestreich   |
|      | Board Members Richard Phillips, Cheryl Stoesser and Stan Oestreich   |                            |
| 1989 | Officers same as in 1988. Laura Glum replaced Rich Phillips  |                            |
| 1990 | President & Secretary the same. Vice President Ardis Ruark Starlene Mitchell, Treasurer; Virginia Hansen, Board  |                            |
| 1991 | Changes made Starlene Mitchell, Secretary, and Chris Dierks, Treasurer. Ardis Ruark moved to President 10/29/91. |                            |
| 1992 | President Ardis Ruark  | Vice-President Bev Huckins |
|      | Secretary Virginia Hanson  | Treasurer Chris Dierks     |
|      | Board Member Steve Gomez   |                            |

Interesting articles on Colonial life appeared in the newsletter during the 1987's. Hints were also given on how to get more information from public officials. Also included were a few notes on the library collection. The collection has been arranged by states, countries, and topics. ...A filing cabinet holds a collection of microfilm. There is also a surname collection. The society also sponsored a HERITAGE QUEST ROAD SHOW. They also had programs promoting the centennial. Also included in the newsletter were qualifications for membership in various colonial and Civil War organizations.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR GENEALOGISTS appeared in 1988. Remember some of those? 1. Thou art a genealogist. Thou shalt have no other hobbies before genealogy. ...5. Thou shalt not destroy the evidence when it hints of criminality, illegitimacy, or insanity...8. Thou shalt not bear false witness by doctoring up the data, regardless of how much better it maketh thy pedigree look.



Checklists of Principal Sources from Nebraska, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Iowa, Wyoming, California, Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington were also published.

Members shared their family history. Articles on orphan children, naturalization, and symbols used in genealogical research were included. All in all it has been a good twenty years.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following article is reprinted from the Genealogy Bulletin by permission of the publisher, Dollarhide Systems, Bellingham, Washington.

## Social Security Records

Social Security records are now easier than ever to access. Genealogists can locate living relatives, search death benefits indexes, or receive a copy of a person's original application for a social security card — perhaps without knowing the Social Security number.

by William Dollarhide

Not long ago, probably in the past decade, an obscure federal judge made a ruling: *dead people have no privacy rights*. What a revolutionary idea! It means that records concerning a deceased person are no longer subject to the constitutional "rights of privacy" we enjoy as American citizens.

As genealogists, "privacy rights" worked against us if we tried to access adoption papers, military records, or documents held by the federal government. Records pertaining to living persons in the hands of Uncle Sam are protected and no other person has a right to see them (unless of course, you were a "plumber" working for the Committee to Re-elect the President back in 1971).

Social Security Administration (SSA) records are no exception. For those of us still living (if you are reading this, you qualify), we can gain access to our personal Social Security account, but no one else can. For example, we can go to a local SSA office and request a report of all payments ever made from past employment, and SSA will even prepare a predicted amount for a monthly benefit we might receive upon retirement.

After a person has died, however, the records for that person can be accessed by

virtually anyone. The Social Security Administration, who at one time made the steps to access deceased person's records an exercise in bureaucratic bungee jumping, have actually loosened the strings and set policy that is now straightforward and simple. This is good news for genealogists.

### Death Benefits Index

In 1990 SSA released computer files relating to deceased persons — but only those whose survivors had taken advantage of the burial benefit to which everyone is entitled. This "Social Security Death Benefits Index", as it has become known, has been widely distributed as part of the FamilySearch system of the Family History Library and their many branch Family

continued on next page...

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### Social Security Records, *continued...*

History Centers. It is also available on Compact Disk (CD) or floppy disks from GeneSys of Provo, Utah, a company that distributes genealogical databases. The period of coverage begins in 1936, the year SSA began keeping records, but the bulk of the index is for more recent deaths since 1962 when SSA began computerizing the data. It is by no means a complete index to every person who died during that period, but an excellent starting point for genealogists. The Family History Library's version contains about 34.5 million names, while the Genesys version contains about 43.5 million names.

A sample from the GeneSys version of the index appears below. The index is organized by state, then names of deceased persons in alphabetical order. However, the state groupings relate to the place where a Social Security number was first issued to that person, NOT the place of death or last residence. The example below includes a listing for my father, Albert Raymond Dollarhide, who died in Blaine, Washington in 1977. His information is in the Oregon section because he first applied for a Social Security card in Oregon. The first three digits of a person's Social Security number indicates the state where it was issued. (See the complete state list on page 6).

Note that Albert Dollarhide's birth and death dates are shown. The "RC" indicates "Residence Code" which is the state code for the place where the death benefit check was mailed — usually the same as the place of death, but not always. RC code 50 indicates Washington State, and a table showing all state codes are shown at the beginning of the listing. The "R-Zip" indicates the postal zip-code location of the place where the burial benefit check was mailed. By using a zipcode directory at any Post Office, one could find that 98230, for example, is Blaine, Washington. The "P-ZIP" indicates the place where a previous Social Security check was mailed, if applicable.

Note that the index listing may omit some items — but consistently shown are the Social Security numbers, names, and dates of birth and death. Genealogists who wish to write for copies of a deceased person's application for a Social Security number can use the Death Benefits Index first, particularly if you don't know the person's Social Security number.

In your genealogical research, the Death Benefits Index may reveal names of relatives you never knew about before, and with an exact date of death and place, you should be able to write for death certificates, locate newspaper obituaries, and fill in more details about the family.

Oregon C-D

Screen 1993 of 2323

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SSN	LAST-NAME	FIRST-NAME	DEATH	BIRTH	RC	R-ZIP	P-ZIP	SNDX
540-38-2833	DOLLANSKY	JOHN	02/00/1960	08/27/1875				D452
542-10-4536	DOLLANSKY	JOHN	07/00/1987	02/07/1913	38	97222		D452
542-56-7430	DOLLANSKY	MARY	12/00/1973	07/17/1889	38	97015		D452
542-12-3909	DOLLAR	CLYDE	12/00/1966	07/22/1884	38	97068		D460
541-34-6525	DOLLAR	ESSIE	04/00/1971	11/08/1888	38	97442		D460
540-36-1841	DOLLAR	LAURA	09/00/1985	12/02/1886	38	97068		D460
540-07-1018	DOLLAR	LAWRENCE	04/00/1977	09/28/1915	38	97045		D460
541-14-9397	DOLLAR	VIRGIL	07/00/1980	09/24/1917	50	98604	98604	D460
541-16-8963	DOLLAR	VIVIAN	09/00/1971	03/13/1921	38	97068		D460
541-05-4003	DOLLARD	MAUDE	12/00/1975	04/10/1887	05	94903		D463
543-16-5542	DOLLARHIDE	ALBERT	03/00/1977	04/19/1905	50	98230		D463
541-09-9822	DOLLARHIDE	ELSIE	01/00/1981	06/13/1910	38	97530	97601	D463
541-14-5849	DOLLARHIDE	ETHEL	03/00/1980	02/03/1890	38	97203	97402	D463
541-12-3188	DOLLARHIDE	HELEN	03/00/1974	06/02/1919				D463
542-14-1424	DOLLARHIDE	IRA	10/00/1962	01/10/1882	38			D463
543-10-0490	DOLLARHIDE	JOHN	10/00/1976	06/05/1909	38	97501		D463
541-32-8507	DOLLARHIDE	MELBEN	11/20/1989	07/21/1931		97527		D463
540-34-0239	DOLLARHIDE	NORMAN	04/00/1981	05/04/1932	05	90731		D463



### Family History Centers

One method of using the Social Security Death Benefits Index is to visit a local Family History Center (FHC). These branch libraries of the main Salt Lake City Family History Library are operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), and they are all open to the general public. To find one near your location, use a phone book to find a number for an LDS church, and call and ask for information about locations and hours of operation. There are over 1,000 Family History Centers in the U.S. alone. Over 600 of these libraries have at least one computer with the FamilySearch system available and more being added monthly.

Within the FamilySearch system is the Social Security Death Benefits Index, along with the International Genealogy Index (IGI), the Ancestral File, and the library's huge catalog. Volunteers are available to assist you in using the computer. It is possible to download information from the FHC site onto floppy disks and take the information home with you, or make printed copies from the databases. There is no fee for the use of these facilities except for the cost of copies.

### GeneSys Genealogical Databases

GeneSys of Provo, Utah is a division of the Dynix Corporation. Under contract from the LDS Library, Dynix was recently licensed to distribute CD disks from the FamilySearch system (including the IGI with some 160 million names).

Automated Archives, another Utah company, is a pioneer in producing large database systems for genealogists on CD ROM or floppy disks. Automated Archives developed an inexpensive and easy-to-use software system for accessing information from their CD or floppy disks, called the *Genealogical Research System* (GRS), which is similar in function to the FamilySearch system.

As of April 1992, all of the databases produced by Automated Archives (and in the near future, the CDs from the FamilySearch system) are now being distributed by the GeneSys division of Dynix.

The Social Security Death Benefits Index is just one of several large databases for genealogy distributed by GeneSys. For more informa-

tion about the CD and floppy disk databases available (plus other products and services) call GeneSys toll-free at 1-800-222-3766. The address is 175 N. Freedom Blvd., Provo, UT 84601.

### Letter Forwarding Service

Genealogists who want to learn if a particular person is alive or not can contact any Social Security Administration office and request that information. However, you will need to know the person's Social Security Number (SSN). You will receive a 'yes' or 'no' answer only. You will not be given an address or any other information about the person. But... if you learn that a person is still alive or not, your search can then proceed with other options.

If you learn that the person is deceased, you can proceed with a search for a death certificate, newspaper obituary, or a search in the Death Benefits Index to see if the person is listed there.

If you learn that the person is alive, you can ask a local Social Security officer to forward a letter to that person. Again, you will be asked to supply the person's SSN. Such requests are initiated at any SSA office and decisions are made at the local office. If it is possible to provide enough information to SSA about a person, including a full name, birthdate, birthplace, and full names of parents, you may be able to have a letter forwarded without knowing the person's Social Security Number.

continued on next page...

## Genealogy Bulletin

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## SSA Telephone Requests

Social Security's toll-free information phone is 1-800-772-1213. It is available for people who need information about SSA's procedures and services. This service is excellent if you are asking about common Social Security topics, such as death benefits, social security payments, and so on. But depending on which operator finally answers, questions of a genealogical nature may cause the operator to leave the room and get a book, or ask a supervisor what to do, because they are not prepared for genealogists asking obscure questions like, "How do I get a copy of my grandfather's SS-5 form", or "I want to see if a person is alive or not." It may be worth the call to ask these questions, and you may even get a good answer — but in the preparation of this report, I called this number three different times and got three somewhat different answers to the same question. (One call resulting in an operator telling me, "I've never been asked that question before...").

On the other hand, this toll-free telephone number is the quickest and best way to find out where to write for a death certificate, and the current fee for obtaining a certified copy. That information is readily available because SSA deals with people inquiring about death benefits on a daily basis. You can use this free service to find out where to write for a birth or marriage record (indirectly), because by asking about death certificates, the same state vital statistics office is the source for birth and marriage records. SSA maintains a current database of addresses and fees for all U.S. States and Territories. This is superior to using published lists of State vital statistics offices (including the "Where to Write..." booklets from the Government Printing Office) which are usually out-of-date soon after being printed.

## Finding a Social Security Number for a Deceased Person

When writing to the Social Security Administration for a person's Form SS-5, and you do not know the Social Security Number, unfortunately, you must provide the *same information you are trying to receive*. Since SSA can locate a deceased person's records by

the Social Security Number alone, having the number is a shortcut to more information. But how can you find a SSN for a person? Here are some suggestions:

- Obtain a death certificate for the person. Since 1936, the standard form for death certificates includes a place for the deceased's Social Security Number.
- Locate papers normally found in a home, such as insurance records, payroll check stubs, business papers, bank statements, cancelled checks (if it was part of person's printed address information), and anything else that might show a Social Security Number.
- If a person had a driver's license, some states include the Social Security Number on the license. Motor Vehicle Departments in most states are open to inquires about a person's driving record. (Massachusetts and Washington are the only two states that will not run a license check). Some states require more information, such as the license number, and last known address in the state. If you write and give the person's name and the nature of your request, it may be possible to obtain a Social Security Number and other information about a person, but primarily for persons still living.
- Records of previous employment may still be on file at the company where a person once worked. As private records, the company does not have to tell you anything, but by explaining the nature of your request as "family business" and that the person is deceased, you may have success.
- If the person was a member of a trade union, professional association, fraternal organization, or even a private club, there may be membership records still available and which may reveal information about a person, including Social Security number.
- Public and private schools maintain records for former students, particularly trade schools or colleges where a certificate or degree was earned by the person.
- If your subject was a federal employee, contact the Bureau of Retirement and Insurance of the Civil Service Commission, 1900 East 'E' St., Washington, DC 20415. continued...



## Finding SSN....continued...

■ If your subject died in a hospital or nursing home, the "face sheet" of the patient's file has vital statistics about the person, including a Social Security number. Nursing homes and hospitals are busy places and such requests will likely be denied if requested over the phone. A written request explaining the purpose or a visit in person may be better.

■ If your subject served in the military for either World War I or World War II, a record of his discharge was required to be recorded at the county courthouse where he resided at the time of discharge. For WWII discharges, the court record will include a military Service Number for the person, and with that information, detailed military records may be available by writing to the National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132. However, there was a disastrous fire in this facility in 1973, which caused a considerable loss of modern military records, including about 80 percent of the Army records from 1912-1959. If your subject was on active duty or receiving veteran benefits from 1973 forward, the records were reconstructed.

The form DD214 is the "separation from service" document for all branches of the military and will give a Social Security Number for the subject — and other vitals.

## Social Security Prefix Numbers

Every Social Security Number has nine digits. The first three digits can be used to learn where the number was issued. The place where the SSN was issued is where the applicant first applied for an SSN number, usually where a person's first job was located, not necessarily the birth state.

A complete list of the first three digits along with the State or Territory is shown below. Railroad workers were assigned a different prefix regardless of which state issued the number, because the railroad workers retirement system preceeded Social Security and administered by a federal board.

We would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Dan Ferrell, Regional Public Affairs Director, Social Security Administration, Region 10, Seattle, Washington, who provided pertinent information to us for the preparation of this article.

SSN Prefix	Place Issued	SSN Prefix	Place Issued	SSN Prefix	Place Issued
001-003	New Hampshire	318-361	Illinois	521-524	Colorado
004-007	Maine	362-386	Michigan	525	New Mexico
008-009	Vermont	387-399	Wisconsin	526-527	Arizona
010-034	Massachusetts	400-407	Kentucky	528-529	Utah
035-039	Rhode Island	408-415	Tennessee	530	Nevada
040-049	Connecticut	416-424	Alabama	531-539	Washington
050-134	New York	425-428	Mississippi	540-544	Oregon
135-158	New Jersey	429-432	Arkansas	545-573	California
159-211	Pennsylvania	433-439	Louisiana	574	Alaska
212-220	Maryland	440-448	Oklahoma	575-576	Hawaii
221-222	Delaware	449-467	Texas	577-579	District of Columbia
223-231	Virginia	468-477	Minnesota	580	Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico
232	West Virginia or North Carolina	478-485	Iowa	581-584	Puerto Rico
233-236	West Virginia	486-500	Missouri	585	New Mexico
237-246	North Carolina	501-502	North Dakota	586	Guam, Phillippine Islands, or American Somoa.
247-251	South Carolina	503-504	South Dakota	587	Mississippi
252-260	Georgia	505-508	Nebraska	700-729	Railroad Workers
261-267	Florida	509-515	Kansas		
268-302	Ohio	516-517	Montana		
303-317	Indiana	518-519	Idaho		
		520	Wyoming		



The Mountain Plains Library Association included the following article in their June 1992 Newsletter. We thank them for allowing us to include it in ours.



# Utah

Information provided by Mary Southwell, MPLA State Representative  
Article by Dave Heighton, Supervisor, North American Reference, Family History Library

*Third in a Series:  
MPLA's Member States*

*These articles are provided by MPLA State Representatives. Their charge is to provide an "article on some aspect of information in each state that sets it apart from the mainstream—someone, something, architecture, whatever that is special and worth sharing." Members are encouraged to send their respective state representatives suggestions. The July issue will feature Wyoming.*

The Family History in Salt Lake City is for family research. This library houses the world's largest collection of records of deceased people who have lived during the past 400 years.

To gather this information we have microfilmed old registers, manuscripts, and censuses; birth, death, and marriage certificates; and court, property, and church records from throughout the world. This record collection, which grows by 4,000 rolls of microfilm and 400 volumes per month, includes information on over 1.5 billion deceased people. Over 1.6 million rolls of microfilmed records and approximately 320,000 microfiche are available at the library. In addition, the library has over 225,000 volumes of books. These include published family histories, local histories, indexes, periodicals, transcripts, and other research aids.

Trained staff and volunteers work at the library to help people search these records and decipher the clues about their ancestors. On an average day, the library helps more than 2,000 people search for family ties to past generations. An additional 4,000 people search the microfilm in over 1,000 family history centers in 43 countries. Like millions of other people, you may find records of your ancestors here.

In addition to the largest collections of genealogical records in the world, the library has several significant research aids that can help you find your ancestors or records about your family.

## *FamilySearch™*

FamilySearch is a computer system that simplifies searching for your ancestor. This system includes a powerful search and retrieval program and files containing family history information. The files are distributed on compact discs.

The program enables you to search for information in the following files, which are described below in greater detail:

- International Genealogical Index
- Ancestral File
- Family History Library Catalog

## *International Genealogical Index™*

Available in microfiche and compact disc. The 1988 edition of the International Genealogical Index lists the births, christenings, marriages, and Latter-day Saint temple ordinance dates of more than 150 million deceased persons.

The compact disc edition used with FamilySearch enables you to search more than one state or an entire country and by parent's names. Step-by-step instructions on the screen will guide you.

## *Ancestral File™*

Available only on compact disc. Ancestral File is a family-linked file containing genealogies contributed to the Family History Department since 1979. The file contains the names of more than six million persons. You can search this file to see if anyone has already contributed information about your family.

## *Family History Library Catalog™*

Available in microfiche and compact disc. The Family History Catalog describes the records at the library. You can use it to find the book, film, or fiche numbers of the records you want to search. You must have these numbers to locate a record or to request a copy through a family history center.

The compact disc edition simplifies use of the catalog. Using FamilySearch, you can easily find information about the library's holdings. Currently, FamilySearch can search only for surnames, localities, and microfilm call numbers. Step-by-step instructions on the screen will guide you.

The microfiche edition allows you to search for a surname, locality, subject, author, or title. Written instructions and a brief video about using the microfiche edition of the catalog are available at library information desks and at family history centers.



The following query was received:

Searching for information on George and Ida Eastman Cleaver, allegedly resident in Pierre in or about 1913. Was the Elsie Cleaver who graduated from Pierre High School in 1913 their daughter? If so, when and to whom was she married? Children? Did George and Ida have other children? When did Ida Eastman Cleaver die? My research thus far shows that Ida was the daughter of William E. and Sarah Ellen Ware Eastman, born 1867 in Lee Co., Illinois.

I am especially interested in hearing from any living descendants of George and Ida Cleaver. Please respond to James G. Goble, P. O. Box 376, Avon, S. D. 57315, or call (605) 288-3643. Mr. Goble is happy to share information on Eastman, Cleaver, Ware and allied families.

Pierre - Ft. Pierre  
Genealogical Society  
P. O. Box 925  
Pierre, SD 57501





THE PIERRE - FT. PIERRE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
P. O. Box 925 Pierre, SD 57501-0925

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A Happy New Year to each of you! I hope that 1993 will bring you the missing links that you have been searching for in your family's history. With the many, many books that are being released on genealogy, history, or documents, perhaps you will join with me in making a New Year's resolution to read at least one new book related to your family's history.

By sharing your book at one of our meetings, we can learn what's new and how you are doing on your research. Let's give it a try!

\* \* \* \* \*

The first meeting for the new year will be held January 19, 1993 at the Rawlins Library at 7:30 pm. The program will be "Doing a Video-Tape of your Family History." The executive board will meet at 7:00 pm. We need your suggestions for programs.

We have some projects that are incomplete, namely the cemetery project and the early Pierre newspaper project. We'll need to take some action to determine how we can best complete these.

\* \* \* \* \*

From GOLDEN ROOTS OF THE MOTHER LODGE, Fall 1992, (p.22) comes the following announcement of a New England Genealogy Competition:

The Connecticut Society of Genealogists has announced its 6th Annual Literary Award to be presented in May 1993 for an outstanding New England genealogy published in or after 1984. The entry fee is \$10 to be submitted with two copies of the publication, which will not be returned, on or before Feb. 15, 1993. Entry is not limited to CSG members - all are welcome!

Additional information and entry forms are available by mail or phone from the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, Inc., PO Box 435, Glastonbury CT 06033-0435.

\* \* \* \* \*

From the TRI-COUNTY SEARCHER, VOL. 13, NO.2 FROM Chester, MST comes the following schedule for planning a family reunion.