
NOVEMBER 1983 NEWSLETTER

MEETINGS: Monthly, third Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the Trinity Presbyterian Church. NEXT MEETING: January 16, 1984. The program will be "Clues dropped While Crossing the Atlantic" by Sheryl Ledlie

The IGS Annual meeting was held Nov. 4 & 5. Those going from our society were: Molly Bowlin, Twilla Dillard, Merieta Grissom, Ruth Hall, Peggy Hutchison, Sheryl Ledlie, Thelma Pehrson, Lucille Perkins, Louise Pilmer, Barbara Rasko, and Edna Van Syoc.

Our workshops held earlier this month were attended by Les Swartzlander, Jackie Runyon, Carol Campbell, Mary Lou Parks and Sharmin Lathrop. We hope these people will join our Society in the near future.

The date for our Society to work at the IGS Library has been changed for this month only. It will be Tuesday, November 29. Contact Molly.

Buena Vista County Historical Museum has for sale their county history book. This book will be out about the first of December. To order contact the Historical Society, P.O. Box 882, Storm Lake, IA 50588. The cost of this book is \$50.00 plus postage of \$3.00 per book.

If you can't find that specific record concerning your North Carolina person, you might check "Records of the Moravians in NCE", 11 vols., 6,000 pages, 1752-1879. These people were super record keepers & they also recorded baptisms, marriages, & deaths of Non-Moravians. Researchers of VA, PA, TN, MD as well as NC should check the indexes of these volumes. -- Southwest Nebraska Gen. Soc. "Ancestors Unlimited"

Also from "Ancestors Unlimited" Walter MANNING, using a P.O. Box in Eugene, Oregon advertises the sale of books and once the money is sent, no book is sent by them. Some people have lost their money and the police have now been alerted. Also, watch out for a Stan SCHIRMACHER, he sends several items for a price, but these items are not worth the price. via the Napa Valley Gen. & Bil. Soc.

We have purchased memorial books for our WCGS Library at the IGS Annual Meeting. The following is a list of these books. Migration, Emigration, Immigration by Olga K. Miller Vols. I & II; Pennsylvania Boundaries by William Russ, Jr.; State Censuses compiled by Henry Dubester, Library of Congress; Genealogists: Where to Write Directory Birth, Marriage, Death, & Divorce from Gibbs Publishing Co. Toledo, OH; Genealogical & Historical Societies, 1983 Edition U.S. & Foreign; Iowa State Genealogical Society Library Shelf List, Oct. 1983 Edition; also Land, Military & Census Records of U.S. by Kay Kirkham. Don't forget to look for these books when you visit our WCGS Library.

REMINDER: NO December meeting. Enjoy the Holidays and we will see you again in January 1984.

The following is a tribute to Reverend Ernest Edgar Parks & Mamie (Yarnell) Parks who lived in Carlisle during the 1920's and 1930's. This is submitted by Darleen (Hiatt) Peterson cousin of Ernest Parks.

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF REVEREND ERNEST EDGAR PARKS

Ernest Edgar Parks, beloved son and only child of Thomas J. Parks and Margaret "Meg" (Hiatt) Parks, was born on a farm near Conway, IA 7 June 1898. Margaret and Thomas J. Parks understood the importance of a good home life for their son, Ernest, and the value of the family interests that were centered around the many activities of the church, school, and community. Ernest E. Parks attended the elementary and the junior high schools at Conway, IA and he took an active part in the church and school activities. It was believed that Ernest had a remarkable personality at a very young age. He was given the responsibility of teaching a class in the Methodist Sunday School at Conway when he was only eleven years old. The teaching experience was Ernest's outward expression of his inward desire to take responsibilities and be held accountable for the consequences. He graduated from the Conway Junior High School 19 May 1915.

During Ernest's youth at Conway, IA he and his parents faithfully fulfilled their commitments to the church, school, and community. Ernest Parks was converted 12 March 1915 and received into membership in the church at Conway during the pastorate of Reverend Ralph E. Mitchell. Ernest's wholesome character, with his concern for people at his young age, was attributed to the motivation and affection given to him by his parents and the family's interests in the worthwhile activities in the home, church, and community.

Ernest was licensed as an Exhorter in the church at Bedford, IA during the years when he attended high school there. Ernest preached his first sermon at Gilead Church which was five miles south of Gravity. He was a faithful member of the Sunday School in the church, he participated in the activities of the Epworth League, and, when called upon he would preach for an absentee minister.

After Ernest graduated from Bedford High School in 1917, he moved with his parents to Carlisle. He was a constant student in the study of Christianity and was influenced along that interest by his parents and friends who knew him well. He was a charter member of Theta Kappa Nu Fraternity at Simpson College where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts 8 June 1925. Ernest seemed to have great physical strength and energy in pursuing his studies. He would oftentimes work by filling speaking engagements while he attended college. He gave much time in ministering to the youth in the communities where he lived. He was athletic and supported the athletical activities in the communities and he coached athletics in the Carlisle Community Schools for a few years.

While Ernest was living in Carlisle with his parents, he met the lovely Mamie Glenn (Yarnell) who shared Ernest's interests and endeavors in Christian Activities according to Ernest's upbringing. In a beautiful wedding ceremony held 3 September 1920, Mamie Yarnell became the bride of Ernest Edgar Parks in their home church in Carlisle, IA.

Mamie (Yarnell) Parks continued her teaching duties in the public schools and was devout in her relationship to her school and church work. Mamie was a dedicated and fine teacher and leader of children.

Mamie was a sympathetic associate in all of her husband's ministerial preparations, his pastorships, and was a constant strength to Ernest Edgar Parks during his last months and days in lingering illness.

Reverend Parks served in ministering at Carlisle, St. Charles, Clarinda, Kirkman, Pleasantville, and Prairie City, IA. He was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Frederick T. Keeney and, after he completed his course of study, he was ordained an Elder at Evanston, ILL in September 1927 by order of the Conference. Records sent to this writer by the Garrett Biblical Institute at Evanston, ILL: "Parks, Ernest Edgar - Entered Institute-Fall Training, 1925. Graduated June 1928. Remarks: Took the 4 years in 3 years." The second record sent to this writer: Ernest E. Parks . . "had been planning to write an M. A. thesis at Northwestern and had indeed requested permission to transfer credits to Northwestern for four graduate courses he had taken at Garrett." Apparently, his ministering in his home church became the most important endeavor during the next year.

Ernest Parks received the degree of Bachelor of Divinity from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary 7 June 1928 and this writer has Ernest's Graduates List for 1927-1928 for 7 June 1928.

Ernest Parks was always active in community affairs and was a member of the Preston Lodge A. F. & A. M. No. 218 and the Order of the Eastern Star, Chaper No. 145 at Prairie City, IA. Ernest's lovely wife was his faithful and devoted associate in all of his duties in the community where they resided.

During the spring of 1930, Ernest Parks suffered much pain which was caused by a growth on the side of one of his legs. As the months passed the pain increased and by summertime his health seemed to be failing. Reverend Ernest Parks preached his last sermon while he was seated in a rocking chair in the pulpit of his church in Prairie City IA 22 June 1930. An untimely death, caused by cancer, took the life of Ernest Edgar Parks at the age of thirty-two years, two months, and seventeen days 22 August 1930. The funeral service was held from the home church of the Parks family at Prairie City 26 August 1930. Officiating at the services were: Superintendent and Reverend F. C. Edwards, Reverend Levi Goodwin, and President J. L. Hillman.

Bereaved relatives and friends gathered at the graveside services held at the Carlisle Cemetery at Carlisle, IA on the 26th August 1930 to pay their respects to the departed Ernest and to comfort other grieved relatives and friends. Reverend Ernest Edgar Parks was tenderly laid at rest in the Carlisle Cemetery at Carlisle.

Mamie (Yarnell) Parks, the lovely widowed lady, continued her public school teaching duties and served her church and community. Before her retirement in the early 1960's, a folding door which divided a large classroom in the Carlisle Church was donated to the church in the memory of Mamie (Yarnell) Parks. At rest beside Reverend Ernest E. Parks: Margaret (Hiatt) Parks (1875-1943) Ernest's mother; Thomas Jefferson Parks (1876-1951) Ernest's father; and Mamie Parks (1894-1966) Ernest's lovely wife.

The writing of this "tribute" to my cousin, Ernest Parks, was the writer's endeavor to preserve records of inheritances for a special person who has gone on before us. The United Methodist Headquarters in Des Moines, IA graciously provided this writer with a BIOGRAPHICAL of Reverend Parks, found on Pages 364-365 in the

Methodist Church Des Moines Conference Journal, (date of the publication following August 1930). The Communications and Publications Department Methodist Church Des Moines Conference Journal granted this writer permission . . . "to use this material in any appropriate way." Some of the names, dates, and places given in this "tribute" were taken from the two pages found in the Des Moines Conference Journal. This writer is grateful for the privilege to use this material for the "tribute to Reverend Ernest E. Parks." The Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary at Evanston, ILL furnished the records of dates that Ernest Parks entered and graduated from the college. The Carlisle Community School at Carlisle, IA kindly supplied some names to this writer, upon my request to the Office of Superintendent. Arlene Miller, secretary to the Carlisle Community School Superintendent, sent the names: Mrs. Mabel Shaffer, Helen (Petrie) Milburn, and Jason Gilfillan. Helen Milburn and Jason Gilfillan were ring bearers at the wedding of Mamie and Ernest Parks. Helen Milburn graciously shared her two pictures of Ernest and Mamie taken on their wedding day. Mrs. Milburn will never know how much the two pictures have meant to this writer.

It has been this writer's good fortune to correspond with Mrs. Shaffer and to learn that she knew Mamie Yarnell very well and that she and Mamie were little girls attending their first year of school together in Carlisle Public Schools. Mabel Shaffer shared her wonderful memories of Mamie and told of their lasting friendship through the years at Carlisle. Mrs. Shaffer had fond memories of Mamie (Yarnell) Parks and she respected her departed friend deeply. Mabel Shaffer's husband was a World War I veteran and they were married 22 August 1919.

Mabel Shaffer shared the name and address of her friend, Reverend Glen W. Lamb also a native of Carlisle, who is Pastor of the Holiday Hills United Methodist Church at Higden, Arkansas. In Pastor Lamb's response to my letter to him, he stated that he knew Mamie and her mother very well and that he had been in audiences when Ernest Parks was the speaker. He found Ernest Parks' messages to be "inspiational!" He remembered Ernest Parks too and . . . "Even though that was 60 years ago - perhaps more - I can remember him . . . I can still see him in my mind - head tilted sideways, black, suit aOd tie - speaking quietly." Pastor Lamb also stated that he recalled that ministers had mentioned that Ernest Parks' work was especially effective in youth programs in his own church, in the District, and in the Conference.

It was this writer's great pleasure to hear from Mary Marshall who is Mrs. Leon Marshall of Bedford, IA. Mary Marshall's mother who passed away in 1969 at the age of 102 years, was a sister of Ernest Parks' father, Thomas Jefferson "Jeff" Parks. Mrs. Marshall and Ernest Parks, her first cousin, had been pals during their elementary school years at Conway, IA. When years passed and Mary went away to college at Des Moines and then taught school, she did not see Ernest Parks so often; however, Mary Marshall did visit with Ernest several times before Ernest passed away in 1930. Mrs. Leon Marshall has a sister, Georgia Meyers.

It has been a great joy to receive letters of remembrances of the Parks families at Carlisle and I thank each person who has contributed and shared remembrances and pictures for this "tribute." I would be truly delighted to hear from other relatives and friends of Ernest and Mamie Parks and Ernest's parents, "Jeff" and "Meg" Parks.

Margaret "Meg" (Hiatt) Parks was a descendant of James Hiatt and Elizabeth (Moore) Hiatt who pioneered in MO in 1820. Margaret and "Jeff" Parks were holders of original Land Patents in Meade County, SD in 1910. Two of Margaret Parks' brothers, Charles Edward Hiatt and John Willard Hiatt, were both living with their families on homesteads in Meade County, SD. at that time in 1910. Ernest Parks' parents were both from lines of hard-working people who were dedicated to their duties to families, church, and communities. Uncle "Jeff" Parks worked for many years on the farm and was also a custodian at the Carlisle Community Schools in Carlisle, IA for many years.

Ernest's mother, "Meg" (Hiatt) Parks was an excellent seamstress and she always found time, in her busy life, to help a friend with sewing and to sew for other families. "Meg" Parks indicated her dedication for dignity and excellence by her home life and her contributions to her family members. By those endeavors Aunt "Meg" was rewarded as being a wonderful wife and mother. Her relatives admired and respected her deeply.

ERNEST PARKS, DESCENDANT OF JOHN HIATT--IMMIGRANT 1690's

James Hiatt, who pioneered in Clay County, MO in 1820, was a great-grandson of Immigrant, John Hiatt. John Hiatt, the immigrant, came to America with William Penn when Penn made his second voyage to his Pennsylvania Colony in the 1690's.

James Hiatt and his family lived one mile north of Liberty, MO and their family dwelling was the only building north of Liberty in 1820. James Hiatt had an original Land Patent to the SE 1/4 of Section 31, Township 52 - Range 31 in Clay County. At the present time that area of land is in the city of Liberty, MO and is immediately south of the Liberty, MO Hospital. In 1837 James Hiatt and his wife and children settled on their homestead land in Platte County, MO and lived eight miles north of Weston.

The 3rd son of James Hiatt and wife, Elizabeth (Moore) Hiatt, was James Anderson Hiatt who married a Buchanan County lady, Perlina Cogdill, the daughter of Jacob Cogdill and Sarah (Rogers) Cogdill. The oldest son of Perlina and James Anderson Hiatt was James William Hiatt, who was born in Platte County and married a Platte County lady, Julia Ann (Roberts). Julia Ann (Roberts) Hiatt's parents were also pioneers in Platte County, MO. Her parents were Edward Roberts and Margaret Elizabeth (Ralston) Roberts.

In 1890 many of the Hiatt descendants and their families had settled on farms in the southwestern counties of Iowa.

September 1983. . . Submitted by a niece of Margaret (Hiatt) Parks Darleen (Hiatt) Peterson--Wheaton, Illinois 60189 Mrs. Peterson is a member of the Warren County Genealogical Society.

The following landowners are listed on the 1872 Atlas map which is titled, "Township 76 North, Range 22 West." This includes all of the present Union Township and parts of Palmyra and East Lincoln Townships.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Anthony, W., 26 | Goldizen, C., 5 |
| Armstrong, _____, 10 | Golladay, J., 15 |
| Bar Est., 24 | Gose, S., 12, 13 |
| Bartholomew, G., 8 | Goss, J., 14, 23, 26 |
| Barrett, H., 26 | Greenway, P. W. C., 1 |
| Batton, W. H., 36 | Greenway, R. H., 1 |
| Beatty, E. T., 36 | Guy, A. J., 2, 11 |
| Beem, A., 2 | Hagen, S., 11 |
| Beem, R. M., 2 | Haile, A., 13 |
| Bennett, B., 20 | Hale, R. G., 25 |
| Blake, J., 6 | Hall, R. G., 36 |
| Blizard, H., 5 | Haworth, D., 18, 19, 30 |
| Bodkin, A. H., 28 | Haworth, D. D., 2 |
| Botkin, L. W., 16, 28 | Haworth, H., 18 |
| Botkin, M. V., 16, 32 | Haworth Heirs, 18, 19, 30 |
| Brees, H., 29 | Haworth, J. D., 7, 18 |
| Brown, E. T., 29 | Haworth, J. H. & J. M., 19 |
| Burgess, P., 21 | Haworth, J. M., 18, 30 |
| Butterfield, W., 8 | Haworth, J. M. & J. A., 17 |
| Butterfield, W. S., 6, 9 | Heiny, G. W., 9, 16, 21 |
| Calanan, J., 29, 30, 36 | Henry, A. R., 27 |
| Callahan, J., 19 | Hicks, A., 24 |
| Camel, P., 15 | Hicks, E. B., 20 |
| Carnes, J., 4 | Hicks, J. C., 35 |
| Carpenter, C.H., 10 | Hicks, W., 25 |
| Cary, _____, 19 | Higbee, H. E., 3 |
| Cason, D. D., 20 | Higgins, J., 17, 34, 35 |
| Coe, Mrs. M., 3 | Hoblit, W. D., 28 |
| Conklin, E., 10 | Hodgen, N., 17 |
| Crewse, J., 16 | Hodges, N., 20, 21 |
| Cruchelow, J., 30, 31 | Hooper, J., 6 |
| Cunningham & Anthony, 22, 27 | Hoover, W., 4, 32 |
| Cunningham, C., 21 | Hubbard, E. W., 22 |
| Cunningham, J. E., 29 | Hull, E., 11 |
| Palby, J. L., 28 | Irion, S. B., 29 |
| Davey, J., 17, 33 | Jamison Heirs, 4 |
| Davis, J. N., 14 | Jamison, M., 9 |
| Davison, _____, 13 | Jamison, M. A., 31 |
| Devin, J., 27 | Johns, H. C., 20, 21, 29 |
| Douglas, D., 1 | Johns, J. C., 9 |
| Duncan, G., 25, 26 | Johnson, W., 28 |
| Edwards, L. G., 10, 15 | Johnston, G., 27, 28 |
| Epps, G., 20 | Kitchell, C. W., 5 |
| Farley, W., 5 | Lacy, G. W., 19, 30 |
| Ferguson, I. J., 24, 25 | Lacy, J. T., 30 |
| Freels, J., 7, 8 | Lamar, J. L., 25 |
| Freeman, G. W., 12 | Lancaster, A.N., 8 |
| Frush, J., 36 | Lang, M., 8 |
| Frush, S. L., 25 | Lang, M. T., 6 |
| Furnold, A., 14 | Leonard, Z., 10 |
| Gibson, J., 24, 25 | Levin, C.C., 2 |
| Gilbert, J., 30, 31, 32 | Lewis, J. E., 34 |
| Fillaspie, D., 24 | Lisby, J., 20 |
| Ginder, T., 19 | |

Township 76 North, Range 22 West, cont'd.

Lucas, R. G., 29
Luce, H., 4
Lube, X., 4
Lutenbill, H., 2, 11, 13, 14, 15
Mate, E., 8 (probably Mote)
McCormick, J. M., 15
McCormick, M., 15
McNeis, J. H., 10
McRae, T., 9
McRay, T., 16
McFitt, D. J., 36
Monroe, L., 2
Moon, H., 8, 17
Moon, J., 5, 6, 8
Moorman, C. F., 35
Morris, J., 4, 5, 8, 9
Myrick, W., 9
Nichols, H., 7
Norris, W., 1
Oakes, C., 36
Oakes, J. A., 36
Page, G. W., 3, 10, 33
Parker, F., 30
Parker, S., 5
Parrish, A. N., 26
Pearson, D., 10
Pennington, B., 30, 31
Perry, _____, 19
Perry, N., 30
Polson, E., 12
Porerkirk, _____, 4
Reed, G., 1
Reed, J., 12
Reed, N., 1
Reed, W., 1
Reed, Z., 12, 13
Reeves, A., 2
Reeves, L., 23
Reeves, R., 2, 3, 11, 12
Reeves, S., Sr., 24
Reeves, S., Jr., 23
Richardson, J., 10
Salsbury, T. M., 31
Sandy & Johns, 22
Sandy, A. V., 32
Sandy, E., 22
Sandy, E. G., 17
Sandy, E. J., 28
Sandy, J. D., 22
Sandy, J. E., 17, 32, 33
Sandy, J. G., 3, 13, 14, 15,
23, 24
Sandy, J. M., 21, 27
Sandy, W. G., 9, 15, 16, 27
Sandy, W. H. & T., 20
Sandy, W. H. & T. J., 32

Seaman, W., 27
Shaw, S., 30
Sherman, J. M., 19
Simons, M., 19
Sinnard, T. J., 2, 3, 11
Spurgeon, C. P., 34
Spurgeon, C. T., 11
Spurgeon, J. M., 14, 23
Spurgeon, L., 3, 11
Stafford, J., 16, 17, 21, 22, 28
Stitt, T., 4
*Surgin, J., 1
Thompson, P., 10
Travis, J. C., 36
Trotter, H. C., 13
Vanfleet, W., 6
Viers, S. M., 3
Walker, H. H., 20, 29
Webster, E., 7, 8
Webster, J. & J., 8
Webster, M., 8
Wilbur, J., 33, 34
Wilton, A., 33
Wood, N. H., 28
Wright, D., 29
Wright, J., 6
Wright, J. W., 3, 6
Wright, W. A., 25, 35, 36
Zin, S., 27
Zinn, S., 35

*Probably Spurgeon

Sandyville, 22
Cemetery, 22
Schools, 6, 11, 23, 32, 35
SS mill, 9

I want to concentrate on the past, present the future of the state of vital records system and give you information on how you might perform family history more efficiently. Hopefully I'll be able to give you an understanding why access has been limited to certain county vital records in the past and at the present time and what solutions have been planned for the future. Indeed, we are committed to resolving the problems.

First I want to know; how many of you have played Vital Records Roulette? Let me explain. Many of you have expressed concerns to me that when you applied for a birth certificate the following happened: First you knew all the pertinent information necessary to get the certificate and placed it on that funny little form. Then you plunked down you four bucks and then you waited 3 or 4 weeks and maybe even longer. And the people at the State told you they did not have that certificate. That's Vital Records Roulette. You feel you have about as much chance of getting your vital records successfully as you would playing the odds and evens in roulette. Now, have you played Vital Records Roulette?

The fact that many of you have played this doesn't surprise me at all. The reasons for the Vital Records Roulette aren't that the state has hired incompetent people. The explanation of Vital Records Roulette lies in the history of recording vital records. Let's start at the beginning.

Births, deaths and marriages were not reported to the state until 1880 when the Board of Health was established. Although several counties registered records of birth from 1867 and records of marriages from 1880 on, the State Board of Health's basic intent for establishing a vital records system was to gain statistical information on whether sanitary conditions were effective for preventing infectious disease. Registration also allowed statistical analysis of births, deaths and marriages. Reporting of births and deaths was to be made by physician or midwives to the Clerks of Court. Marriages were also reported to the Clerks of Court and the Clerks of Court reported all vital records on a yearly basis to the state. From the beginning, the reporting of births and deaths was not complete. It seems the opinion prevailed among many physicians that there was no lawful reason for requiring them to make reports of births and deaths without compensation. Many physicians felt the law was unconstitutional because it required them to report births and deaths. In 1882 the Supreme Court ruled that the vital statistics law was constitutional because it served the public good. Even though the Supreme Court so ruled, many physicians still did not report births and deaths. Old Board of Health biennial reports document the concerns of the Board of Health. Frequently from 1883-1897 letters were sent to all physicians within the state in an attempt to persuade them to report. In 1887 it was evident that the Board of Health was concerned over the completeness of reporting of births and deaths by physicians and midwives. An excerpt of a letter to the Iowa physicians states: "Will not the medical profession of Iowa see to it that our state with less percent illiteracy than any other is not behind in the reporting of vital statistics. Is it too much for this Board to expect that every licensed physician and midwife in Iowa will in the future make full and reliable reports of deaths and births?"

Because reporting of vital records was so poor, vital statistics were not even published in the biennial reports from about 1886 to 1896. In

1897 a change was made by the legislature in an attempt to resolve the problems in reporting births and deaths. The change required assessors to collect and report information about births and deaths, rather than the physicians and midwives. The assessors would report to the Clerk of Court who would in turn report to the state. Now, let me tell you how well this worked. One year 17 counties did not report a birth.

In 1903 in hopes of having better reporting of deaths, a law was passed which gave undertakers the responsibility of insuring that the Certificate of Death was filled out. The effect of this law was very positive. Almost all deaths in the state were recorded thereafter.

Recording of births remained the responsibility of the assessors until 1921, and the reports continued to be very poor. In 1921 the U.S. Census Bureau's Vital Records Model Registration Act was passed. And shortly thereafter reporting of births went over 90%. In the 1940 Works Projects Administrations Guides of Iowa Statistics it states that only 50% of the births and deaths were reported from 1880 to 1921.

There are other contributing reasons why vital records were not reported. First, there were 2,265 local Boards of Health in the early days. Many of you have expressed a concern over a lack of uniformity in the 99 Clerks of Court offices today. Having uniformity in 2,265 Boards of Health charged with the enforcement of the Vital Records Law in the time of the horse and buggy was impossible.

Another contributing reason which would account for Vital Records Roulette is that there were several changes regarding where vital records were to be kept. Original records were kept in the County Clerk's offices from 1880 to 1904. Then 1904 to 1906, original birth records were sent to the state. Then 1906 through 1908, original birth records were again kept in the county. Then from 1909 to 1938 only transcribed records were kept in the county. Still today original birth records are sent to the state.

If you have conducted family research in Iowa, many of you have noticed that some county Clerks of Court do not have vital records for a one or two year or several year period between 1904 and 1910. This is the reason why. The changes in the law regarding where vital records would be kept, were responsible for the county's lack of records. Also it seems that between 1921 and 1941, there was a misunderstanding in some counties as to whether vital records were to be recorded at the county level. Some counties still do not have vital records during this period or only have partial records. Hopefully this explains why many of you have played Vital Records Roulette and have lost your \$4 or more.

Now let's shift gears. "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard." or "That isn't logical."

These exasperated statements are usually made when accessibility to vital records is discussed. To be quite frank, there are some things from your point of view that seem not to be logical in the handling of vital records. But you must realize that they are the law and that we must administer them accordingly.

In the beginning all vital records were open and accessible to the public. Anyone could view them, even the illegitimate births and the

adoptions. The first controversy over illegitimate births was recorded in the 1883 Board of Health biennial report--100 years ago. It seems that one or two newspapers had been publishing the names of parents of children born in one of our cities. The newspapers were publishing "illegitimate births and those born before the lapse of the conventional 9 months." One newspaper published a report of an illegitimate birth and listed the father as "unknown" with the name and address of the mother in full. The writer of this letter asked the local Board of Health, the city council and the State Board of Health to consider births to be confidential and not available for publication in newspapers. The Board of Health answered, "Dear Sir, I know of no reason in the world why the Board of Health reports and records are not open to public inspection. All records are open provided they are called for at proper times and in the proper way. I do not see how any public record should be closed to the public."

In 1903 the Board of Health and the legislature authorized the historical department as depository and display area for vital records for "all time to come."

In 1938 the biennial report of the State Health Department stated the following about illegitimate births, "A great many states have already come to the realization that not only the question regarding legitimacy appearing on the standard birth certificate is without value for statistical purposes, but also is a source of harm to the child, itself not illegitimate but merely the result of an illegal act. More and more of the states that have been registering births for many years have adopted laws which direct that the original birth certificate for a child born out of wedlock be placed in a sealed envelope, which may be opened only upon court order. Such laws further provide for a special form of birth certificate that in the case of adoption, for example, will permit the issuance of a certified copy of that child's birth certificate indicating that it would be the blood child of its foster parents."

In 1939 the State Attorney General, in a ruling, stated that all vital records were current and that vital records should be transferred back to the State Health Department from the historical department. Although I can't prove this fact, I believe the Attorney General's ruling was based largely on the fact that Social Security was passed in the 1930s, and vital records assumed a much greater role for a person than ever before. When WW II came along vital records became even more important because accurate birth records were essential to prove dates of birth and also for proof of citizenship. More stringent procedures for applying for delayed records of birth were instituted so that foreign agents would not be able to obtain this important birth certificate.

In the 1950s, of course, there was the Cold War and McCarthy's un-American activities. In the 60s there was the Viet Nam War and riots on college campuses and race riots in larger cities--all of these happenings encouraged closed records--closed for the purpose of protecting record integrity.

In 1946 adoption abstracts were requested on all adoptions prior to (back to 1880) and from 1946 for the purpose of sealing the original birth record and creating a new certificate without reference to the adoption. During this time a new birth certificate was developed so that the birth certificate for illegitimate births would not have any reference to illegitimacy on it at all. In other words, they sealed those records

at that time. The certificate was also changed to gain more information for statistical purposes. Better statistical computations were made possible through the use of an IBM punch card tabulation machine. This information appeared in the section of the certificate as "for statistical purposes, medical history, confidential information", or something similiar. This type of certificate is still used today.

Accessibility to vital records was limited to only those persons or agents who had a direct blood line relationship and now is called "direct intangible interest". A person today must have a "direct intangible interest" to receive a record from the State Health Dept. In about 1974 the legislature passed a law opening vital records held in county clerks offices which were 65 years and older except those records which were confidential by law. In 1981 all vital records were opened at the county level, except those confidential by law.

The reason why the law was changed in 1974 was to allow the filming of vital records 65 years and older under the Bicentennial County Microfilm Project sponsored by the Bicentennial Committee with the Genealogical Society of Utah acting as filming agent. The purpose of the project was to preserve county records and provide greater accessibility to these records by having them in a central depository at the State Historical Department in Des Moines. The filming was stopped by the State Health Department. Vital records were being filmed which contained legally confidential information and the Department of Health could not allow the filming of the confidential information under this arrangement.

As many of you know, confidential information is mixed in with accessible information in the county records. This causes a difficult problem for the Clerks of Court whose responsibility it is to serve the public, but who are also responsible for the protection of confidential information, contained in those records.

In the Spring of 1981 the sparks for the future were ignited. Your organization through then president, Carl Nissly, requested a public hearing on a proposed vital records rule. The result of that public hearing was the Department established a Vital Records Task Force in June 1981, for the purpose of resolving accessibility problems of vital records. Representation on the task force included members of the Clerks of Court Association, Health Department, Historical Department staff, Freedom for Information people, the newspaper association representatives and, of course, the Iowa Genealogical Society.

Through the direct or indirect advice of the Vital Records Task Force, several things have taken place and I think they are all positive.

The department has written several administrative rules. One administrative rule defines an illegitimate birth. That doesn't seem to be very exciting, but it is very important for our project to improve accessibility to birth records because there was a large disagreement for a long time on just what an illegitimate birth was.

Another department rule permits the use of volunteers to help in solving the vital records problem.

Then there is a new administrative rule that has just been written and will be effective Nov. 16 (1983). This rule defines accessible information on birth, death and marriage certificates as all information exclusive of that information section "for medical purposes, statistical purposes, confidential information only"--the bottom portion of the certificate, as a general rule. This rule has the effect of opening almost all docket books in the counties for deaths and marriages. Unfortunately some of the death record books which contain still births will not be accessible at the present time, but we will be resolving that in the future.

The State Historical Department is in the process of splicing the films from the Bicentennial Project for the 66 counties that it already has so that the marriage and death records will be available for patron use. Until now these films were not available for use. Death records containing still births will not be accessible to the public because it is not accessible by law.

Another offshoot of the Vital Records Task Force, the Department of Health and Historical Department have agreements with the Genealogical Society of Utah to act as our filming agent to film important county records. In essence the Bicentennial Records Filming Project is begun again and filming will be completed for all of Iowa. There will be a few changes in the scope of filming. For example, vital records will be filmed to about 1927. Before they were only filmed to around 1914. Other record categories have been eliminated, due to financial concerns. So far Calhoun County has been filmed this summer as well as some material at the IGS library. The Depts. of Health and History's commitment to this project is great. Staff, four at a time, from both Depts. have been out inventorying county records. We have completed the inventories of four counties in north central and northwest Iowa at this time, and have scheduled four more for next week. When staff is inventorying in the county courthouse, we try to make an attempt to locate local genealogical and historical societies so that they may inventory non official county records such as cemetery records, church records and family histories. It should be noted that cemetery and church records, I would think, would play an important part in performing family histories for years to come due to the fact that many, many births and deaths were not recorded prior to 1921.

The microfilming will procede in the following manner: The 33 counties that were not filmed in the Bicentennial Project will be filmed first, basically that is in north central and northwest Iowa. The other 66 counties will have filming performed in them to insure all approved records are filmed consistently throughout the state.

The positive benefit to the State Historical Dept and those performing family research is that the State Historical Dept. in its long range planning wants to establish a regional library system for historical microfilm and other records. The microfilms that we obtain of these county records will be very important to this system.

Concurrently with the microfilming in the counties, the Dept. of Health will undertake a complicated project which will purge confidential entries from birth records and in the death records containing the still births. The goal is to make all county vital records easily accessible. Purging of confidential entries from birth records will add consistency in allowing accessibility to birth records. The purging process will be performed in the following manner: microfilm of county birth records and death records

containing still births will be processed through a special Xerox machine called a copy flow machine to obtain a paper copy. The quality of this copy is like a Xerox copy of a paper, not like a reader-printer copy that would fade in the sun. The paper copy will be purged of confidential information by volunteers that read film in the purged form. The purged paper copy will be sent to the County Clerk of Court for patron use. In other words, she can put that paper copy flow book right up on the counter. This will provide uniform accessibility in the County Clerk's offices. The purging portion of this project will begin the first quarter of next year (1984) and its success depends upon volunteers from your organization. Your efforts will make a difference now and for generations to come. Projected completion for the entire project, the microfilming and the purging is about 3 to 5 years. The cost of the project is approximately \$3 million, most of which is being incurred by the Genealogical Society of Utah.

In conclusion, to make this project a success in the least amount of time, your help is needed in terms of inventorying important non-official records in each county and in the purging of confidential entries in the birth records and death records containing still births.

The potential benefits of the microfilm project for both the Historical and Health Depts. are great in terms of accessibility and preservation. And, of course, the Health Dept. achieves the protection of confidential information which is mandated by law. What is more important than any benefit any governmental entity receives, is what the citizens of Iowa will ultimately receive, now and in the future. The citizens of Iowa will have important documents preserved and, most importantly, accessible for now and generations to come.