

if your family is hostile, expect to find subjects about which they are justifiably unhappy. Look about your family as you know it and don't be surprised if there were similar individuals in your family's past. If the family has been at all prominent, its skeletons may be common knowledge to all but yourself. The family of William Henry Harrison sat on family papers for years because they showed that "papa drank", while all the world knew that his campaign for President was successful because of the lavish distribution of spirits, and that it ended abruptly with his death following a tumultuous inauguration.

But what will these facts that you have gathered do for you? Why did you ask those questions? If you are young enough, you can start verifying each detail at the Oregon State Board of Health in Portland. Your own birth certificate should show your parents' names, where and when they were born, your father's occupation, where your mother lived, and if there were older children. Of course not all the questions are answered on every certificate. Your parents' birth certificates, at the State Board of Health, if they were born in Oregon since 1903, or at the City Board of Health in Portland if they were born in that city since 1864, should furnish the same information relating to themselves and their parents. If they were born before the days of birth certificates, they may have obtained a delayed certificate, and evidence filed with the State Board of Health prior to 1947, and now in the State Archives, or the records of the City Board of Health, may fill gaps. Full copies of certificates of vital records can be obtained from the State Board of Health, or the Portland Board of Health, for \$1.00, provided they know why you want the information.

Marriage records since 1850 have survived in most county court houses, or are available at the State Board of Health since 1908. They often show the names of the couple, of the bride's father, the ages of the bridal pair, and the groom's occupation. Since 1910 marriage dates lead to the society page description of weddings, which includes the names of relations. Equal

in importance to marriage records are records of their dissolution, or of divorces in which the parties establish the fact of marriage and account for children. Certificates at the State Board of Health since 1925 will lead you to the proper court for verification of facts, and there may be evidence on file relating to relatives involved. Remember maladjustments resulting in divorce are ages old, calling for sympathetic understanding. They are important only to the extent that they reflect family characteristics under strain.

Death records of the State Board of Health since 1903 will give the date of birth, tell where the deceased was born, and should include the names of parents. The death certificate also shows where the deceased was buried, and there is nothing like a family cemetery to help you in your hunt. Once the death date is established, an obituary in a local paper may be important, although most papers published before 1900 were concerned, not with the surviving family, but with the place of the deceased in the community. Death not only produces a certificate, but there may be an estate and a will. These are filed as part of the probate records at the County Court House, and are most helpful in establishing the relationship of father or mother to their children, or grandchildren, or of an uncle and aunt to their nieces or nephews. A guardianship will likewise reveal the names of minor children, while the transfer of real property through an estate will positively prove the relationship. You not only want to check the will itself, but you should follow through all the court orders recorded in the docket book or in the minutes of the territorial county courts. If you seek Oregon estates prior to 1845, they are recorded in a thin book in the office of the Secretary of State in Salem.

Newspapers which contain obituaries, descriptions of weddings and birth notices may be at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland, the University of Oregon Library at Eugene, the Oregon State Library in Salem and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Prior to 1880, fine files are

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