

METHODS OF PRESERVATION:

1. One family history I have contains one thousand letters and documents written by my great-grandfather in Germany to my grandfather in America, 1853-1926. These letters were all translated by my brother who served a mission in Germany and later learned to read the Old German Script. While he translated we both worked on the genealogical record of this family for years. After my brother died, I continued the family history research and created three more volumes (after the original eight volumes of the translated letters).

Volume 1 contains: Information about the original family name, a concise general history of the family, original family settlers to America (immigration records), history of my own direct family line history, my PAF records and a short synopsis of each collateral line with the same surname. Volume 2 includes: originals or copies of all documents such as newspaper articles, genealogical letters from relatives who corresponded with me, birth/confirmation/marriage/death/burial records, census records, university records, “mysteries” yet to be solved, records of findings during ancestral country visits. Volume 3 shows all working family history still in progress. The wonderful thing about this volume is that the next researchers can continue onward without having to try to redo the past. It is organized by family line and clearly states what has been done and where to start again to proceed forward.

2. Several other family histories are based principally on photographs that lead through the lives of parents, children and grandchildren – hundreds of them. A history of written remembrances leads the reader through the pictures. I have found this method to be “containable.” Sometimes the remembrances may be several pages long. Others may be short quips that identify the people under their pictures (still always written on the back of the picture) and tell year and event when picture was taken. A short hint on picture preparation: I trim off parts of a photo that have no historical relevance to the photo itself – like blank sky, etc. I always leave in background that dates the photo in time, i.e. a car, pram, etc.

3. I have hand written extracted histories from journals and information kept over the period of time our children were in our home (birth – high school graduation). These histories have been written from a “mother’s point of view.” I wrote them by hand because I felt it made them more personal. They include all the pictures, school memories, vacations, all family Personal Ancestral File (PAF) records, honors, cute sayings, journal information about that child, and many other things I began collecting at their birth in cardboard boxes. All of this is now in beautiful 3-ring leather binders and bring great joy to each child, spouse and grandchildren. Each child’s personal history is in several volumes. (Some things just do not fit into volumes, for example, yearbooks, plaques. Those I put in a separate box for them to store in their own homes!)

4. I have some family histories that are restored (recopied exactly on computer) from original journals that would become “lost” due to earlier non-archival care. As stated earlier, the provenance of these records has been religiously retained. Grammar, etc. has not been corrected (although I have put clarifications with my initials in parentheses next to the word or expression.) Originals have been saved in acid free containers.

5. I transcribe oral histories, using my computer. It is much easier when one uses a professional transcribing machine. These are then placed in the proper record to which it belongs.

6. I also maintain file cabinets where I can keep my professional “how to” information and a drawer for each family line containing material that cannot fit into the Family History volumes. However, all family history material contained in these files has been referenced in the volumes themselves.