

Family trees in bloom

By SHIRLEY LYNN

Checking through family histories can uncover all sorts of interesting people ranging from the proverbial black sheep to the great majority of white sheep, from pioneers to ne'er-do-wells, from the good to the bad, from accomplishments to failures.

All added together it makes for intriguing reading, writing and talking about, the B.C. Genealogical Society has discovered.

Formed a year ago with 10 members from Richmond, the Society now has 45 members across Canada.

The original 10 were all quite experienced in tracing family histories as they had been doing it for some time.

They realized the need for a B.C. group, not wanting to be left out by strong Ontario and Saskatchewan Societies doing the same thing.

The B.C. Society now puts out a quarterly which allows members to keep up on "pedigrees."

Purpose of the Society is two-fold, said secretary, Miss Elizabeth Jarvis, who is a school teacher.

"We have monthly meetings with speakers telling us how to go about doing research, and we also have a beginning library. People write us for information all the time and we check through our material."

"The books, pamphlets, the recording of cemetery inscriptions all through B.C., and the obituaries we clip out of newspapers. They're all kept

in shoe boxes at Mrs. Trevor Hughes' Burnaby home. We also keep those family pedigrees which have been done.

"And that's one thing we need, filing cards and cabinets, to keep our material in. So if anyone wishes to donate these things, they would be most welcome."

Miss Jarvis herself has long been interested in checking her family tree, although she said "you never really finish the tracing". She read books from the library explaining how to get started. "I've always been very curious.

"I was luckier than most people because I was able to trace one branch of my family back to 1704 quite simply. I did this by writing to the vicar in the little town of Chevington in England where my maternal grandparents were born.

"I didn't know too much about the paternal side of the family until I wrote a letter to a newspaper in Fredericton, N.B. I received seven answers from relatives I didn't even know existed and they gave all sorts of information."

Miss Jarvis pointed out that "it's difficult to get back beyond 1660 in England because church records were stopped during the Civil War. And parish records in Scotland have never been kept as well as the English ones."

The Society holds its first anniversary gathering at a social Wednesday at 8 p.m. in the Richmond Arts Centre, 767 Minoru Gate, Richmond. Anyone interested is invited to attend.