

The Genealogy of the Times



mourning dress

This current time-span seems to be replete with genealogists searching out their family histories. As the internet continues to open more doors and possibilities, there exists conflicts of information. For example, the use of pedigree charts which connect families is adding unwanted members of families. We have to remember, a computer-generated pedigree is different from the work of individuals, whose work does not always compare. For example, the computer will add Jane Smith born 1800 and your Jane Smith (the same person) born 1801 as separate entries.

It can be horrifying to see one's work combined with inaccurate genealogies. Some sites will actually add other people's group sheets (to yours) which you know to be wrong. If we are to retain any sort of accuracy, perhaps it is best to refrain from using the online charts. On the brighter side, much has been lost, what with the burning of court house records, etc. Hopefully, some of these records will emerge from attics and antique shops. The clerks sometimes took their work home with them. I once found old county books in an attic which were spared the loss in a court house fire because the clerk who once resided there took the books

home. The court house records reveal tons of information about the families; deeds, marriages, wills, estates, tax digests, etc. provide details other than names and dates.

Interestingly, listed in the estate records (Annual Returns) are such items as mourning gloves, rings and dresses. When someone dies and their personal items are sorted through, how many times have you seen old pictures and wondered whose those people were? And did you notice the old-fashioned dress styles? There are doubtless a stack of old-timey items in the estate being sorted. In olden times, all of these items were generally passed down to the heirs. Are you disposing of items which will be more valuable to your later? As we gather information from the internet, more than one site should be studied. Simply because zillions of collections are out there. There are more possibilities with the internet as more genealogy websites emerge and offer different information!