

## THE MCPHEE CLAN OF AUSTRALIA

### ON GENEALOGY

(Condensed from October 74 PARADE)

Unlike other professions, there are virtually no controls over genealogists, and it is open to anyone to set himself up as one. So far as we know there is only one body which teaches genealogy as such, and that is The Institute of Genealogical and Heraldic Studies, Canterbury, England. Local Genealogical Societies in Australia do have talks and lectures for members on how to trace ancestors, but these lectures are not designed for the professionals. For the most part genealogists become professionals through practice, and often have had some associated experience in an allied field as lawyers, archivists or librarians.

As far as we are aware there are only two firms of genealogists in Australia, these are : Ancestral Research Services of 1 Myera St., Mt Claremont WA and Charters Slade & Co of 47 Fellows St Kew Vic.. The latter incorporates the Melbourne firm of Genealogical Research and Publishing. The Australian Society of Genealogists, Heritage House, Riley Street, Surry Hills, NSW, also undertakes a limited amount of research, but it is largely confined to Australia. The other two firms will arrange for research overseas through their agents.

Most of the State Libraries and Archives in Australia have record agents or accredited researchers who will search their records. If you write to the library or archives they will send you a list of record researchers available. The authorities, however, make not recommendation as to their competence to undertake research of this nature. In many cases, particularly with archives, access is often restricted to the public on the basis that archival materials are unique and valuable records, and the authorities take the view that excessive use or mishandling will result in the early destruction with irreplaceable loss for present and future generations, and in such cases it is necessary to employ a searcher. The librarian or archivist has only a limited amount of time available for research, and is not in a position to undertake extensive research into records. Therefore it is often better to employ a searcher as the person concerned is usually familiar with the records and what they contain and you can be fairly sure that all records pertaining to your problem will be examined.

In England, the Society of Genealogists, 37 Harrington Gardens, London, undertake searches of their records which are very extensive, and will recommend other genealogists or record searchers known to them. The College of Arms also undertakes genealogical research, although much of the work is concerned with heraldry. Being an official body, its fees are higher than other searchers. If you wish to have research undertaken by the college, then you should write to Dr. C. Swan, York Herald of Arms, College of Arms, Queen Victoria St, London.

The Scottish counterpart of the College of Arms is the Lyon Office, New Register House, Princes Street, Edinburgh. It does not undertake genealogical research, but deals with all matters armorial. The Scots Ancestry Research Society, 20 York Place, Edinburgh, does undertake research. Genealogical research is very difficult in Ireland at the moment, and there are virtually no private searchers available. The Genealogical Office, Dublin Castle, Dublin does undertake research but because of the scarcity of searchers it may take up to nine months before research commences.

Fees are a matter for negotiation between genealogist and client, and it is advisable to reach a firm understanding before searches start. Most of the genealogists work on a basis that an amount is paid in advance (anything from \$20 to \$100) and the necessary searches are undertaken until this sum is expended. You should be wary of those who promise you results for a fixed sum. In genealogy, however, it is not possible to ~~buy~~ buy results, and search fees vary with anything from \$5 to \$10 an hour being not unusual.

Note The Genealogical Society of Victoria, c/- Honorary Secretary, 77 Alma Street, Chadstone, 3148, has issued a guide book on how to trace your ancestors. The book ANCESTORS FOR AUSTRALIANS contains 100 pages of lectures given at the Society's meetings, and articles published in its journal 'ANCESTOR' and covers all ways and means of tracing family history as well as being a reference book for overseas origins of families and surnames. Price \$3.00 plus 20¢ postage direct from the Victorian Society.