

# Deposits Feed Americans' Desire to "Do" Their Genealogy

JUDITH NIERMAN

Genealogy has become the second most popular hobby in the United States, behind only gardening, according to **ABC News**. Washington, D.C., is fortunate to be home to three preeminent U.S. genealogical libraries, which are located at the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution headquarters, the National Archives, and the Library of Congress.



## What is a Genealogy

A genealogy is a work that contains information about the history of a particular family. These types of works typically contain a substantial amount of factual information, such as the names of family members, dates of birth, marriage, death, and other significant events, as well as family trees illustrating the relationships between family members.

*Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices 715.1*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS



PHOTO BY JUDITH NIERMAN

Ralph Cole and Desiree Woodard recently selected *The Mariano Family; Italy to America 1903–1933* by Steven G. Mariano.

The Copyright Office plays an important role in establishing the Library as a leading genealogy library. The mandatory deposit requirement results in a steady flow of published genealogies arriving in the Office when the authors claim copyright. Ralph Cole, selection librarian in the U.S. Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Division of Library Services, together with his colleague Desiree Woodard, who until three years ago worked in the Copyright Office, come daily

The well known genealogy website Ancestry.com recently was valued at **\$1.6 billion** and claimed two million paid subscribers.

to the Registration Policy and Practice Program offices to look over deposits and select appropriate ones for the Library's collections. Cole says they see about 50 genealogies a week. Most genealogies are covered by routine selection. That is, the registration specialist sets them aside for the Library. Cole sees ones with which the registration specialist may have questions. Even if genealogies are self-published, the Library collects them comprehensively, he said. "Many are very well done,"

he continued. "I had a genealogy that was published in only five copies. Two were deposits. Although genealogies are published in small runs, they may be very substantial."

The Library stopped collecting unpublished genealogies 10 years ago. According to **TED HIRAKAWA**, Literary Division chief, the Office does not offer unpublished genealogies for selection. They are sent to the Deposit Copies Storage Unit in Landover, Maryland, where they are retained for the duration of the copyright. Hirakawa said that most genealogies are published online now, so the Office does not receive as many as in the past.

FamilySearch claims that the Library holds **50,000 genealogies**. Most of these would have come to the Library through copyright deposit. ©