

# Your Family History through the CCFHA

Your family history may be very important to you, or you may simply be curious about it. Either way, you can accomplish much through the CCFHA. We invite you to read this leaflet about the organization and what it offers.

"CCFHA" abbreviates "Corson / Colson Family History Association". It's a group cooperating to research, share, and publish information about family histories, resources, and "how to do it." It's a non-profit, volunteer group open to everyone, most likely to interest you if someone in your family background was named Corson, Coursen, Courson, Curzon, or about 135 other ways of spelling the name including less obvious derivations such as Colson, Vroom, Corsa, Reser, and DeCoursey.

# "Corson" Families in History

North America has been blessed with a few "Corson" families for nearly 400 years. Some arrived here from Europe bringing the name with them. A few came from Africa. Several of the larger families adopted their surnames from patronymics while living here. The CCFHA is interested in all of these groups and people. Sharing through research and resources to understand our several backgrounds is part of what we do. In fact, extensive information about these families and how they fit in history is already posted on the CCFHA website. All is available for a very nominal cost, or even free.

## **Past and Present: Cooperating Family History Groups**

In 1896 Dr. Hiram Corson published an extensive book, *The Corson Family*, about his own family from Staten Island, New York. It led to a Corson Family Association as early as 1912, but the group failed to embrace allied families and soon died out. In 1939 Orville Corson published a more comprehensive, two-volume book, *Three Hundred Years with the Corson Families in America*, that attempted to include family groups of all origins; the book is still an important "family Bible" for many.

Two family history enthusiasts started independent newsletters in 1981-1982, one concentrating on Corson families from New England, the other on Courson families in general. By chance the newsletters were named *Corson Cousins* and *Courson Cousins*. A connection was soon made, and efforts consolidated. The surviving publication is *Corson Cousins*, with a scope that includes "Corson" families of every origin and spelling. It became and remains the official newsletter and journal of the CCFHA.

Corson Cousins, published quarterly, is distributed to all CCFHA members and subscribers. The publication provides current information about the organization's projects and other activities, about resources available to researchers, and about the results of research efforts by members and others. Issues have been indexed annually for easy research access, and are now available by digital search. Copies are distributed to selected libraries for the benefit of the public at large.

The CCFHA was formed in 1987 based on interest generated by the newsletters. The CCFHA is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia and recognized by the IRS as a non-profit 501(c)(7) organization. It is a volunteer organization; no one is paid for what they do. Membership is open to all. Through the years more than 400 people across the country have participated in the group.

#### **CCFHA Website**

The CCFHA website serves as the main electronic vehicle for disseminating and organizing the organization's information. Website sections give information about known family lines, major research projects, research aids, and a military honor roll. The research aids include a link to the Corson DNA Project and indexes for every

issue of *Corson Cousins* and *Courson Cousins*. A members-only section provides direct access to 15 years of back issues of *Corson Cousins* (in PDF format). The CCFHA website is located at http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~ccfha/

## **Corson DNA Project**

This project supplements standard genealogical research for individuals with the Corson surname and surname variants such as Colson, Courson, Coursen, Decoursey, and Vroom. Since its inception in 2004, the project has identified the genetic signatures of progenitors in five different major Corson/Colson/Courson families, and made a start on others. The information has allowed some individuals who were unsure of their Corson ancestry to connect to a particular family. More information is available on the project website: <a href="http://www.corsondna.com">http://www.corsondna.com</a>

### 300+ Project

In the seventy years since Orville Corson wrote his book, nothing has been published to update it or correct the errors and omissions that have been noted. The CCFHA is attempting to fill this void through the 300+ Project. It's a big effort which has already taken years and promises more, but data are being received, writers have contributed, and progress is being made. More family history data are being sought and additional writers are welcome. Everyone with a stake in the results is encouraged to participate.

# **Libraries Programs**

The CCFHA has established a Research Library and expands it when resources are contributed or purchases are feasible. The collection currently contains more than 1500 titles in one form or another, to which another 200 will be added from the 300+ Project. The collection is focused on family history and history, including books, pages selected from suitable resources, pictures, and manuscripts. The indexed catalog for the collection is available online through the CCFHA website.

The Libraries Program also includes ongoing efforts to place relevant materials in

selected libraries. Fourteen major genealogy and public libraries receive franked copies of *Corson Cousins* each quarter, and 6 of those libraries have been designated as depositories to which additional materials are donated when feasible.

#### **Other Efforts**

The CCFHA embraces other interests as opportunities arise. We administer an electronic forum to assist researchers. In the recent past, efforts have been applied to indexing US census records and to translating 19<sup>th</sup> century French publications about Courson families in Europe. We are encouraging the accumulation of digital images. We welcome participation from others who wish to pursue their interests in ways that will be helpful to all.

# Membership

Those who are interested in the programs and activities of the CCFHA are urged to support them through membership. Dues are modest; they cover costs for publication and distribution of the newsletter/journal and provide a margin of support for the Association's work. (Contributions are also welcome.) For current information about member benefits, dues, subscriptions, and related matters, please use the application form or consult the membership section of the CCFHA website: <a href="http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~ccfha/aboutccfha.htm">http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~ccfha/aboutccfha.htm</a>