

Mehitable Higginbotham, County Clerk, Puducha County.

Howdy, Oh, Howdy

Mercy, I done feel just bodaciously overwhelmed that you all wanted me to come back and spread some of my wisdom around you.

I done checked my records and would you believe that it has been 17 years ago tonight that I done first visited with you? My how, the time does fly!

As I look around, I see some familiar faces, and honey, you all are just like me – you ain't changed one bit. Maybe a little more grey hair, and a wrinkle or two here and there, but to me you is all pretty people.

I understand that the Mortons are here, and they are real genealogizing people. He is even the President of this organization and has been for about a hundred years .Where are you? Well, I just thought I'd let you know that you need to see about your business rather'n' than looking up all them dead people. The last time it rained, my salt wouldn't pour.

Now, when your Program chairman, Mrs. Goodlady done called me and asked me to come – she did say, "make it short." Those of you know me well, or even slightly – knows that ain't a –gonna be easy...but, I'll try.

Since I'm a –gonna speechify about writing to courthouses for some kind of information .I wonder if they's any of you out there has HAS WROTE to a courthouse? If they is, would ja raise your hand? My! I done come to the right place!

FIRST THING. Right off – you better know that courthouses ain't got no RESEARCH PERSON. If'n they have the time, they don't mind tending to your needs, but for goodness sakes, do remember the ALPHABETS of letter writing.

TASKE THE "C":

- **Be Concise.** State your needs in as few words as possible.
- **Be Complete.** Give all them pertinent facts, but Git it to the point!
- **Be Courteous.** County clerks do enjoy a nice word now and then – like please and thank you.

NOW THE "W":

- **Who?** – Send the full name. In case of female type records = give the maiden and married name if possible. Give the RIGHT names .NICKNAMES ain't gonna cut the mustard.

- **What?** – What is it that you want? Birth or death certificate, will, probate record, estate settlement, marriage records, land records or deeds or even court records.
- **Where?** – Be sure you are writing to the right courthouse.
- **When?** – If at all possible, give the exact date that you figure the event done took place. If'n you don't know an exact date, give an about time – search not to cover more than a ten year span.
- **Why?** – They don't care why. They could care less.

And don't forget them **SASEs**. That's them self –addressed stamped –envelopes. Ain't gonna hardly get no answers without one of them.

Now that I done tole you some hints – I want to share something else with you. Through the years as a county clerk, I made a collection of rathern' interesting letters that done come into the courthouse. I brought some of these letters and abstracts from letters I done got. These might show you now NOT to write to courthouses.

Now here's the first one .