

Things in Motion...

All things are in motion and
nothing is at rest ... you cannot go
into the same (river) twice.
—Heraclitus (540?–480?) B.C.

HISTORY

STUDENTS have for generations found no good reason to study history—and those few who actually enjoy learning about the past are usually dubbed “nerds” by their fellow students. Why do many of us feel that to study the past is to waste our time and effort? Strangely enough, there are a number of seemingly valid reasons.

It has been noted that history is written by the victors, which may be true in large measure—and which immediately taints the accounts that are left to be read by future generations.

Another observation points out that the records we inherit are most certainly affected by lapses in memory of those who relate what they recall as the facts—even though their recollections may vary widely from that of their peers. This leaves some doubt as to whether the historical data left for us was accurate—or which of any number of differing accounts is true.

Any serious effort to determine accuracy may well involve such diverse aspects as the state of mind and health of those whose duty it was to record events; was political pressure brought to bear? Did money or favors enter into the equation? At best, we can only guess at conditions that existed hundreds and thousands of years ago, let alone those bits of history that were handed down by word of mouth for generations. Admittedly, history is not exact, yet it is vitally important to us in so



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many ways that we cannot ignore it for all the uncertainties that come with it. Among those famous quotes by learned people is that of George Santayana who said “*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*”

As a retiree with time on my hands, I find it interesting (and challenging) to discover the history of my environs—a hunt for information that is often far from easy. My first steps involved the search for historical records of my birthplace. I found three volumes of history that gave me a good start—and pointed me in directions that led to added information as well as added curiosity. My search uncovered three books that were published by the authors and distributed only in a very restricted area. One book consisted of a compilation of anecdotes told by the participants and verified by them to be true. Since real people were named with their permission, there probably is a large degree of accuracy, which makes this book very important as a historical account of the community. I also found newspaper accounts of a number of events effecting life in my small town. World history affects the nations; local history affects the people we call neighbors—in some way, history affects everyone.