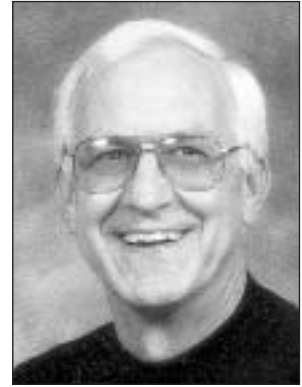


Ernie Janzen



Heritage vs. History: Are *You* a Pioneer?

I doubt that many pioneers felt they were performing at heroic levels—yet in hindsight, we marvel at the perseverance of so many of our forefathers. Pioneers simply went about their daily life, reacting to circumstances based on what needed to be done at the time.

The pioneers of North America are the source of much literature, including popular TV sitcoms. They provide a nostalgic reminder of our heritage, though rarely are the true hardships accurately depicted. I think “Nostalgia” would suffer if we were reminded about the difficulties of life in those days

It is interesting to note that few of these early pioneers were motivated to become wealthy. The focus of the pioneers was a matter of finding a better life for their families.

In the modern sense, the creator of Apple Computers, Steve Jobs, and Microsoft’s Bill Gates, qualify as pioneers in the modern sense. They ventured into

unknown territory, overcoming giant obstacles in their efforts to succeed. They are two of hundreds of innovative pioneers in the field, yet we choose to recognize only a handful of names.

Pioneers simply went about their daily life, reacting to circumstances based on what needed to be done at the time.

“Big Money” has forever changed the way we view success. The current culture has turned to keeping score on achievement by tallying the number of dollars generated. The bumper sticker, “He who dies with the most toys, wins,” is close to the philosophy of today’s generation.

No longer do scientists work arduous hours in labs simply for the

benefit of Mankind. They want the right to patent their findings. The primary object may be to generate wealth from research efforts.

Of late, we seem to have too many pioneers in the area of creative accounting. When the moral yardstick gets out of focus, the results are devastating.

We, as Notaries, must constantly bear in mind one of the focal points of our profession: we shall not lend our name to any document that involves an unlawful act or that is contrary to the law. Many of us are making significant efforts to broaden the scope of our profession, to provide the general public with greater access to legal services. This pursuit is motivated by more than the opportunity to earn more money.

Only time will tell if the efforts we are putting forth today will be viewed as “pioneering” to our children and grandchildren in some future day. ▲