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Couple's hobby a 'grave' subject

United Press International
John Fowler Mitchell, 90, and his 86-year-old wife, Sheila, have set themselves the mammoth task of recording every headstone in every cemetery in Scotland. It's a hobby that has lasted 20 years.

The collections of information and maps they publish at intervals have proved invaluable not only to genealogists and historians but also to many ordinary people from all over the world who are looking for clues to the identity of their ancestors.

Mitchell first became interested in cemeteries when he was stationed with the Army in India many years ago. On the tombstones of Delhi, he said, he found a fascinating precis of much of India's history, including details of a succession of invaders, such as Moguls and Persians.

On his return to Scotland, he began to search for traces of his own forebears and discovered that Scottish churchyards are ideally suited for genealogical study.

"For a start," he said, "in Scot-

land, a wife's maiden name is always included on a gravestone. In the same plot, or nearby, you'll find all the related family and children, so it's just a case of comparing names.

"There was also a long tradition of naming the children after their grandparents in a strict order of precedence, and that makes it easier to establish relationships. Another help can be clues such as you find in Perthshire where decorative signs are used on the stones to indicate the dead man's trade.

"A loom or shuttle, for example, would indicate that he had been a weaver, while a knife would mean that he had been a shoemaker, and a hammer that he had been a smith."

The Mitchells have now become

well known overseas for their work, and applications for their help arrive daily from the United States, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

One recent problem they successfully solved was to trace the ancestors of a German from Hamburg who was descended from a Scottish exciseman.

When the Mitchells visit a churchyard, they make a plan of the site, marking the position of each stone and its relationship to those on either side.

"It's real detective work," says Mrs. Mitchell. "We crosscheck our findings with old records . . . and information from any other possible source, such as old lists of university students or, say, landowners — any-

thing, in short, which might give clues.

"The work must be done methodically or it's of little value and have to remember to look at the back of each stone as well as the front. In one recent case involved a stone leaning at an angle, we discovered the name of not only one wife but two more hidden at the base."

What really fascinates Mrs. Mitchell is the continuity of the Gulf of the Grandfather, she said, "was a known portrait painter in Edinburgh, and very often I'm able to tell people where there is a picture of one of their ancestors so that they can go and photograph it. I would be surprised at how little features often seem to change."

The Battalion

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Ex-official decries nominee

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Canales said he had represented several clients accused of marijuana offenses, including Fred Bremer, who was convicted along with Raza Unida gubernatorial candidate Ramsey Muiz for smuggling marijuana.

Farris said Canales has been accused of improperly soliciting cases. Canales was found in contempt of federal court in 1976, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned that conviction.

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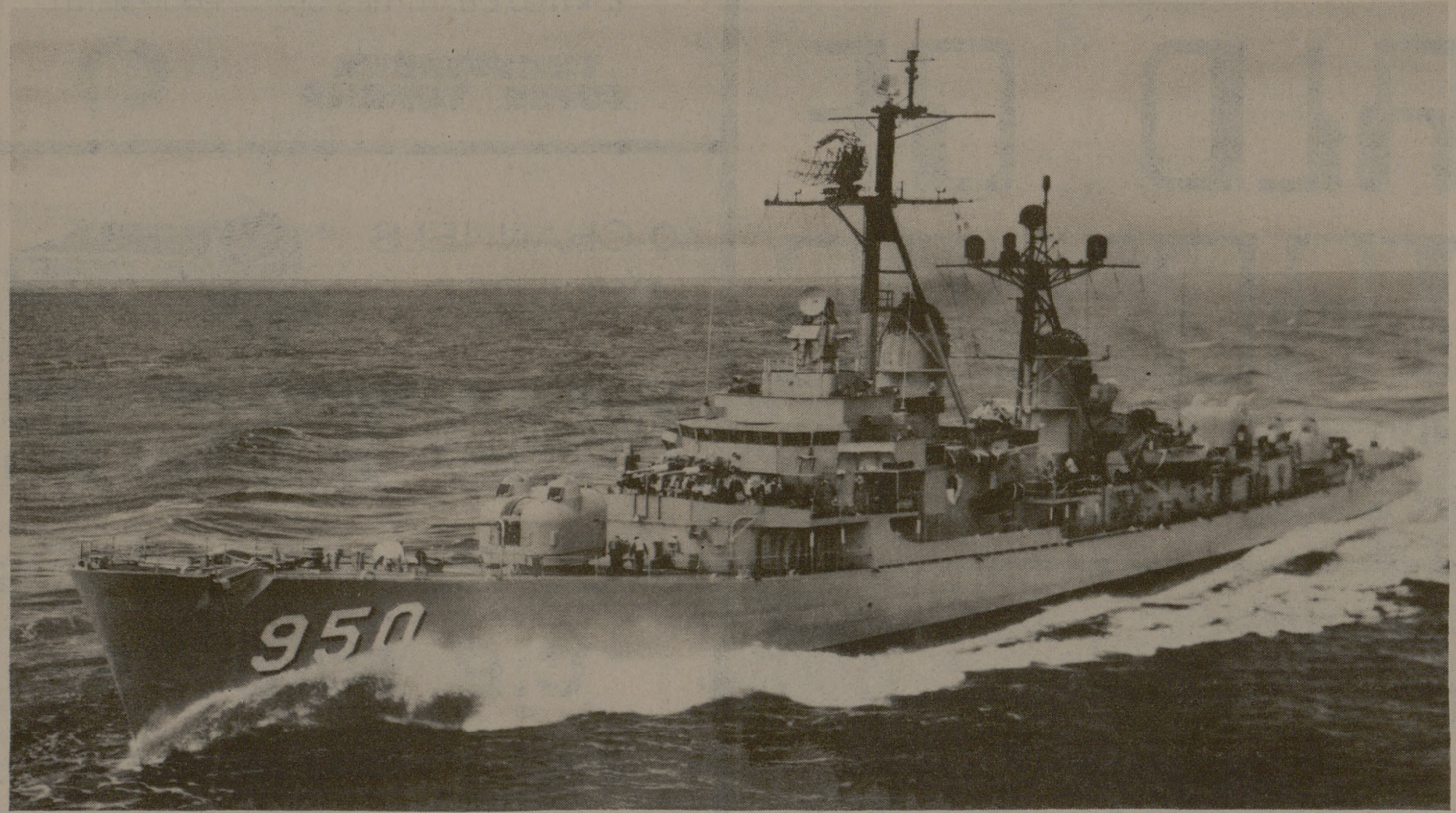
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BILLIE BILLINGTON oils Bryan, Texas	IRIS FRANK woodcrafts Smithville, Texas	MARILYN KRAUSE dried flower art San Antonio, Texas	HERSCHEL & ERMA SMITH antique barbed wire pict. Spicewood, Texas
BOB BLUMBURG jewelry Houston, Texas	GOLDEN CRAFTS framed butterfly pict. Corpus Christi, Texas	PATTI LAWRENCE crafts Wichita Falls, Texas	MARY LOU TAYLOR crafts Wichita Falls, Texas
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NANCY BOECKER jewelry Brenham, Texas	WAYNE HOLSTER string art Fort Worth, Texas	PATTI MAGERS oils Corpus Christi, Texas	PAKALIA WALKER oils Houston, Texas
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